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“My wife! what wife? I have no wife!”—*Othello*.

ALICE;

OR,

The Wages of Sin.

A NOVEL,

By F. W. PANGBORN.

NEW YORK:

CHARLES T. DILLINGHAM.

1883.

ALICE;
OR
THE WAGES OF SIN.

A Novel,

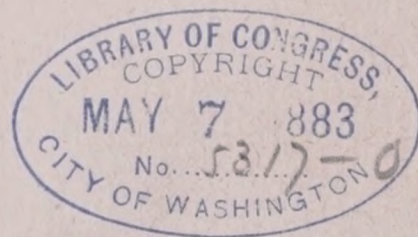
BY

F. W. PANGBORN.

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"Oh fearful sight for men to look upon!
Most fearful of all woes
I hitherto have known! What madness strange
Has come on thee, thou wretched one?
What power, with one fell swoop,
Ills heaping upon ill,
Than greatest greater yet,
Has marked thee for its prey?
Woe! woe! thou doomed one, wishing much to ask,
And much to learn, and much to gaze into;
I can not look on thee,
So horrible the sight!"—*Sophocles.*

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1883
By F. W. PANGBORN.

Press of
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Jersey City, N. J.

DEDICATION.

TO MY FATHER:

"Such as I have, give I thee."

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
CHAPTER I.	
GIVEN UP BY THE WATERS.....	1
CHAPTER II.	
TOO LATE !.....	7
CHAPTER III.	
THE PARTNERS.....	12
CHAPTER IV.	
AN UNHEEDED OMEN....	20
CHAPTER V.	
FROM THE GRAVE.....	30
CHAPTER VI.	
MR. DOJERE IN A DUNGEON.....	40
CHAPTER VII.	
STOLEN FROM THE DEAD ..	51
CHAPTER VIII.	
A DISHONORED FATHER.....	59
CHAPTER IX.	
SAVED BY A WOMAN'S TEARS	68
CHAPTER X.	
GATHERING OF THE STORM-CLOUD.....	77
CHAPTER XI.	
THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM	87
CHAPTER XII.	
THE STORM-CLOUD BURSTS.....	93
CHAPTER XIII.	
THE WAGES OF SIN ..	109

PREFACE.

"To-morrow the critics will commence. You know who the critics are? The men who have failed in literature and art."—LOTHAIR.

THIS book is given to the reader, as the exposition of a terrible possibility in actual life. Should there be found, in its pages, any warm tints, any cheering or amusing passages, the author will be glad to know that they have brightened a moment of some reader's life. But he has not written merely to amuse. He has sought to "point a moral," as well as to "adorn a tale;" and, if the work shall become the means of helping some sincere soul to a strengthening of its determination to think before acting, to study consequences before creating causes, the author will not have written in vain.

F. W. P.

ALICE;

OR

THE WAGES OF SIN.

CHAPTER I.

“Moan, moan, ye dying gales!
The saddest of your tales
Is not so sad as life;
Nor have you e'er began
A theme so wild as man,
Or with such sorrow rife.”

“DARLING MAMIE:—Come home if you wish
to see your mother alive. L. P. M.”

Thus read a note among the “Personals” of a metropolitan journal, which was in everybody's hands, on a chilly October morning, not many years ago. Nearly everybody read this journal, and many read the short item addressed to “Darling Mamie;” a few even paused, in thought,

to wonder, in a passing way, who the writer might be, and to whom the appeal might be addressed. Such a notice was not like the majority of those in the same column with it. It came not from silly intriguante, shrewd scoundrel, wily lawyer or dashing swell. Its message was of a different tone from those above and below it. It had naught to do with clandestine meetings, or estates to be had for the asking (and the fees), in England. Its message was simple and not at all mysterious, but it told a tale of terror, sorrow and suspense, a tale of breaking hearts and of souls full of misery. A dying mother's last appeal to a wayward daughter, a last chance offered a lost girl, to come again to the loving heart which had cared for her from the cradle, it was sent broadcast over the land, in the hope that the wanderer might see it, and come home.

Only one, who has been the sender of such a message, can know the pain of suspense, which must follow its publication. The restless nights, the listening for the ring of the door-bell, the hurried reading of the papers in vain search for an answering message, the reiterated, "will it find her ! oh, will she see it !" of the voice and heart,

Each heart knoweth its own bitterness, and each must suffer for itself. We can felicitate another in his happiness, sometimes congratulate him ; we can mourn with him in his sorrow, but seldom intelligently sympathize with him. Only to those, who have themselves passed through the dark valley, is the profundity of its darkness known. To know what it is to suffer, one must suffer himself ; and of all sorrows, the sorrow of a breaking heart is the sorrow, which must oftenest sob itself to rest in its own tears.

Such were the heart-throbs which appeared in that little two-line notice. Did they awake an answering throb in the heart of the lost wanderer to whom alone, of all the vast multitude who might read them, they were addressed ? Did this last pleading turn back the stray lamb to its mother's fold, even though but to see her die ? Alas, like many another piteous appeal, did this one go wailing forth, only to be lost in empty air ? Did it not find in its broadcast multification an answering heart ? Was this already sorrow-burdened mother-heart to be denied that one last solace, before it should cease to beat, and be forever still ? Was she to die with the despairing, "*Eli,*

Eli, lama sabachthani!" on her quivering lips? Such things make it hard to believe in the mercy of God. After months of agonizing prayer, months of untiring search, here, there, everywhere, with all the help that man can give and money can buy, can it be that, in the end, no ray of light shall break in upon such darkness; that the end shall be even as the beginning; can such things be, and not wring from the soul the cry, "My God—my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" The God-Man could not refrain from such a feeling of despair, and shall a mother be stronger than Christ? Was this dying woman to pass away, with this cry on her lips? It were hard to think it; but let the story tell itself, and, perhaps, the reader may find a lesson, teaching how much evil may follow a bad beginning, and how the sins of man may come back upon his own head, and even involve the innocent in the doom of the guilty.

Many of the numerous readers of that newspaper, which appeared that chill October morning, read, in another column, another article of somewhat more public interest; but none of the readers, it is safe to say, thought of connecting

it in any way with the two-line notice already quoted. The item of news was one, which interested the newspaper reporters and police officials for a short time, and which read as follows :

“Last night, at 1:30 o'clock, some men employed at the National steamship docks found the body of a young woman floating in the water. The woman was apparently about seventeen years of age, fair hair, hazel eyes, light complexion, and her features were regular and handsome. She was dressed in an old, black alpaca dress, but her underclothing was of a quality too fine to correspond with the dress, and bespoke good circumstances on the part of the wearer. Nothing by which the girl could be identified was found on the body. She was taken to the morgue.”

So read the terse newspaper account of a woman's sad death. The corpse of the dead girl was exposed in the city morgue for the customary period ; many came to gaze upon the calm features, now free from all signs of trouble, and many remarked the beauty of the face. But none knew who she was ; and so, in due time, she was buried in the public plot of the cemetery, there to rest, unknown and forgotten, through the roll-

ing years, while other sad deaths and other women's woes should interest the world in their turn, and pass on into oblivion, like herself and her sorrow.

CHAPTER II.

“ No mercy now can clear her brow
For this world's peace to pray;
For, as love's wild prayer dissolved in air,
Her woman's heart gave way !—
But the sin, forgiven by Christ in Heaven,
By man is cursed away ! ”

IN the crisp air of an October evening, while the printers in that great newspaper building were setting the types of that little two-line message, which a sad-faced, gray-haired gentleman had given to the office clerk for publication, a girlish figure plodded along, with weary steps, in the road leading to the city from a neighboring suburb. At intervals of, perhaps half an hour, this young woman paused, and, leaning against a fence or tree, rested, for she was very tired and had come a long distance, having already walked from the city to the suburban town. She was fair and sweet to look upon, and noble in appearance, but trouble and woe were now upon her, and she would have looked poorly indeed to those who,

a short time before, were pleased to behold her.

Her errand to that town had been a sad one, but she had done it successfully, and now, relieved of her burden, she was trudging back to the city, and to death.

Her story is easily told. Mary Morton had met a fate similar to that which befalls many a noble girl. Daughter of affluent parents, she had been thrown into the society of the highest classes of her city, and had become acquainted with a young collegian, with whom she fell in love, at the age of sixteen years. This young man, not yet of age himself, she had been persuaded into marrying clandestinely, he making it an excuse that, if his marriage were known, he would not be allowed to remain in his college. Therefore, agreeing to keep the marriage a secret, until he should have graduated, she consented to the union.

The time went by, and the young student's graduation day was near at hand, and Mary was filled with an anxious happiness, when she, one day, received a letter from him, telling her that he had received a tempting offer from abroad, which he must accept, as soon as he should leave

college, and asking her to wait a little longer, before making their marriage public.

Filled with grief and horror, the alarmed girl wrote him, in reply, that she could delay no longer, and that he must come home and acknowledge her. The reply to this was, that he would do as he pleased, that there was no legal marriage, both being minors at the time, and that he would go abroad at once. Mary wrote again, this time an humble, piteous appeal, but the young man did not reply.

Stung to the heart by such treatment, and terrified by the future, she fled, soon after, from home, and was never again seen by her relatives.

She found some work in a factory for a time, but approaching maternity soon drove her from that ; and, after leaving the hospital, with her baby in her arms, she had drifted aimlessly about, begging for work, and getting none.

The little money, which she had, is gone ; and, to-night, heartsore and footsore, she is walking back to the great city, leaving her baby behind her, and wondering, in a dazed way, why she should thus suffer. As she plods along the dark road, she lives over again, in a dream-like

sense, the happy days of her life. She sees her noble father, always so proud of her, the older sister, to whom she was wont to go with every childish trouble, and to whom she has just gone, although the sister knows it not, with her last earthly care ; and she sees once more the mother-face, gentle and good—and then she sees no more, but breaks forth into violent sobs, which attract the notice of a passer-by—and she hurries on her way.

How long it seems. Why go back to the city at all ? There is but one life there for her, and that life she will not live. She may be a ruined and lost girl, but she is still proud and pure in heart. So on she goes. But the thought keeps recurring—why go back at all ? Why not end it here ? The river is just as calm and deep over there as in the city, and why go on ? She comes to a cross-road ; surely it must be an invitation for her, for it leads directly toward the river. She takes the new road ; the lights of the city are in sight, but she is not now nearing them any longer. Here is the river. She did not expect to reach it quite so soon, but then, perhaps, it is better so.

She stands above the dark water now, upon a little pier, to which a pretty pleasure boat is moored. A thought comes to her: will some fair maid to-morrow sail forth, in this pretty little boat, with her lover? Perhaps. Love and life may launch their bark here to-morrow; despair and death shall be here to-night.

She takes one last look at the still stars, in their soft, dark bed of sky, one look at the same quiet stars, reflected in the dark water, and, with the word "mother" softly trembling on her lips, she is gone, and the river receives her in its ample bosom. Too late, oh dying mother! Too late, oh sorrowing father! Your gentle call, sent broadcast throughout the land, published in a thousand places, spread among thousands of people, is too late. Not all the newspapers in the world, not all the telegraphs in the land, can call the lost one back. She is gone—gone to the gentle river, which received her, when the world would not; gone to the arms of Him who said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden," and who meant it. Lost to the world, lost to the father, lost to the mother—gone.

CHAPTER III.

"Business associations seldom reveal the inner life of a man."

MR. DOJERE was in his office, alone. Mr. Dojere was not a man to be easily put out of temper, that is when business was good, as it was at present, but he was not feeling just right this morning, despite the fact that business was good and the firm of Dojere & Co. was in a prosperous condition. The fact was that it was not business at all, which troubled Mr. Dojere this morning. For forty years the firm of Dojere & Co. had been in business, and now Mr. Dojere was in such a position that he might have retired altogether, had he felt like so doing, but he did not. Mr. Dojere was a man whom few understood, and with whom few could get along. Abrupt in speech, blunt even to incivility at times, he was a man who seldom won the cordiality of strangers, yet those who knew him well, understood that, beneath his rugged exterior,

there was the heart of an honest, upright man, and respected him as a good citizen, and the next best thing to a true gentleman, a true man.

Mr. Dojere had a wife, a sweet tempered woman, who, by the way, was the only "boss" that Mr. Dojere had, for she knew how to manage him, and a family of numerous children, among them an adopted daughter, who was very dear to him.

This girl was now eighteen years of age, and as lovely a young woman as man ever gazed upon; and it was about this very person that Mr. Dojere was at present worried. The girl was very dear to her adopted father, and it was with no small degree of anxiety that he began to fear, lest she might form an attachment, which would bring her unhappiness or life-long misery. For young Albert Thornbury, his junior partner, who had been abroad in charge of the foreign business for several years, was at home now, and a guest at Mr. Dojere's house, and that worthy elderly gentleman had not failed, being a keen observer, to notice that Alice had already found favor in Albert's eyes, and that Albert had been not unkindly received by Alice.

Mr. Dojere was not disposed to like this sort of a match, for the simple reason that he loved his girl too much to risk her happiness with a man of such a nature, as he thought Thornbury's might be; so, while satisfied with his younger fellow-businessman as a business partner, he did not relish the prospect of having him for a son-in-law. Mr. Dojere knew but little of Albert's life while abroad, but he feared that it had not been of the kind to fit a man to become a good husband. Hence it was, that Mr. Dojere was not in a good humor, on the day of which we write; and he was going over, in his mind, the *pros* and *cons* of the matter, when Thornbury himself entered the office.

Mr. Dojere was right. Albert was a handsome fellow and a dangerous one for young girls to know. Thirty-seven years of age, tall and as finely formed as a first-class soldier, beautiful in face as a Greek ideal, and possessed of all the culture of a finished gentleman, he was a man eminently fitted to win the hearts of women, and, if reports were true, they were not a few, who had already been captivated by his graces. He was credited with having committed all the follies of

mankind, excepting marriage, but, really, no one had ever charged him, with proof, of being guilty of any dishonorable act. It was only gossip, perhaps, but, nevertheless, Mr. Dojere would have preferred that Albert should have remained abroad, or else that he should have waited until Alice was well married (say to his son Joe, a matter which may have had something to do with the emotions of Mr. Dojere's heart) before returning to America.

However, Albert was here, and, although he might do his best, there was little hope that Mr. Dojere would be able to engineer this matter in his own way, if Albert should strive to do, as his senior feared that he might.

As the junior partner entered the room, Mr. Dojere could not help admiring the graceful dignity of the gentleman, who stood before him and gave him a genuine "good morning." It was the instinctive homage which the commoner man always pays to the gentleman, even in a republic, where "one man is as good as another," as the low emigrant who comes here, imbued with a foreigner's hatred of "the government," says, and which, being translated, means: "I refuse

to recognize the fact that there are differences between men other than those laid down by law."

"Good morning, sir," said Albert, cordially extending his hand, and drawing up a chair. "I see that my old friend has lost none of his methodical habits. Always on hand at the time set, and always interested in his work. I wish that I might say as much for the junior member, but I fear that—"

"Le'me tell you, le'me tell you," interrupted the elder with his customary abruptness, "such talk as that is all nonsense. Your management abroad has been first class. However, as I have always said, there is nothing like system, and everybody should acquire it."

"True," replied the other, "systematic habits are good things to form, as the schoolmaster said, when he thrashed the whole school every morning, in order to get that part of the work done and out of the way for the day, but to a single man, without home ties or attachments, system in everything is difficult of attainment. Now if a man is married—"

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Dojere, snapping his fingers and blowing out his cheeks, a habit of

his when in earnest ; “that’s just it. You are a right good business man, Thornbury, and have plenty of brains, but you don’t settle, and I tell you a fellow must settle down, if he wants to make a man of himself.”

“That is an idea which I have had in my mind for a long time, sir,” replied the other ; “but circumstances have not been favorable. In the first place, marriage, in my way of thinking, means more than a simple living together in peace and harmony, love and comfort. Of course, all these must be included in connubial bliss, but these alone would be, to a man of my temperament, simply a stupid bondage—a sort of mutual stagnation, in which neither party would become any better, wiser or nobler than each was at the start.”

“I’m afraid your ideal is rather above that of most of us,” replied the elder.

“Perhaps it is,” said Albert, “but it is an ideal, and as such I must abide by it, or remain as I am.”

“Yes ; but le’ me tell you,” said Mr. Dojere, “that if half the rumors I have heard concerning you when abroad be correct, your ideal does

not seem to worry you much in your practical life."

"From you, sir," replied Albert, "knowing you as I do, these words may be taken without umbrage ; but, remember, please, that I have never been in the habit of making my private life a subject of conversation, and that what is past is past. If there are any dark pages in my history, they are written, and, I hope, sealed in secrecy, and it is not my intention to review them at the present day, but to profit by them in future, and use them as guides to a better life. I am now at an age when, as you say, I should settle, and, could I find the wife whom my heart craves, I would be only too happy to wed her and cherish her as a wife should be cherished. Your advice, sir, has always been good, and your judgment in business matters sound, but I fear that on the subject of marriage I should fail to find, even in you, a satisfactory confessor for my heart and soul. Let us drop that subject and look over the business."

"Very well," said Mr. Dojere, and the two men were soon absorbed in business.

Late that afternoon, as Mr. Dojere walked slowly

home, the conversation of his young partner kept recurring to his mind, and, the more he thought over it, the more it puzzled him. He had heard queer rumors concerning this young man, unverified to be sure, but still ugly enough to make him dislike the present announcement ; but there was a frankness, yet reserve and dignity, about Thornbury, which almost convinced Mr. Dojere that the rumors must be false. Perhaps, after all, it would be better to trust the word of a man, whom he had always found honorable in business, and disbelieve the rumors. Alice was, it may be, the very woman who might fill Albert's ideal, and if so, what arrangement could be nicer, both socially and financially ? He would dismiss the matter altogether, as love affairs were not in his line anyhow.

Yet, those rumors. And Mr. Dojere walked thoughtfully home.

CHAPTER IV.

"She loved me for the dangers I had passed ·
And I loved her that she did pity them."

"Men do their broken weapons rather use,
Than their bare hands."

SEVERAL weeks had passed, since the night, when Mr. Dojere had walked slowly homeward, pondering the probability of closer relations between his partner and his beloved daughter, and during these weeks, Albert had certainly improved in the estimation of his senior. His graceful manners, his culture and good taste, and, in particular, his excellent methods in business, pleased the elder man, and, the more he began to know of him, the more he found himself liking him.

No partners ever got on better together. The blunt, outspoken man of hard sense and the gentleman of accomplishments and real business ability found in each other the qualities which, while not, perhaps, alike or congenial, made each respect the other and like him for the worth

which was in him. Albert took care of their outside interests, and Mr. Dojere guarded the business which was managed at the desk, each one knowing that the other was better fitted than himself for his share of the work. The firm of Dojere & Co. was, in a word, working harmoniously and prosperously. Thornbury was everywhere, in the city and out, and always busy. Mr. Dojere was always at his desk in the corner of their building, from 9 o'clock in the morning until 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

Albert had taken rooms in a good hotel, and his bachelor quarters were such as the most fastidious gentleman of taste would have been unable to criticise. He had hunted up a few of his old chums, who were living in the city, and was beginning to be well known in society.

At the house of Mr. Dojere he was always welcome, Mrs. Dojere having taken a great fancy to him, and Alice—well, there was no evidence yet to warrant the assertion that Alice thought him anything more than a very agreeable person. They went to theatres together, and she was often seen riding with him in his neat buggy through the park, or sauntering by his side along

the fashionable streets on a pleasant afternoon. No one could say that Alice was in love, but of Albert much might have been said, had the gossips known all that he could have told them.

O Gossip, thou most villainous of all villains, thou intangible, impersonal, yet ever-present, always existing bane of society, what epithet can I apply to thee which shall contain enough henbane and other noxious poisons, metaphorically speaking, to fitly qualify thee? Thou blackener of the good, thou smircher of the innocent, thou coward of cowards, polluter alike of thy victim and thine agent, Heaven pity the man with a past, the woman with a fault, if they ever get within thy foul clutches! Rather, a thousand times, would I be falsely accused before the harshest tribunal of the land, than that my name and honor should fall under thy notice, thou wretched and seldom punished sinner against the goodness of mankind, thou sneaking accuser, judge and jury of us all, trying cases without warrant, rendering verdicts without evidence, condemning without right or reason!

Had the gossips known. But they did not know. Albert Thornbury's past was three thou-

sand miles away, in that great burial-ground of many pasts, London, and he knew that it could not follow him to America. It was an unpleasant past, but, after all, it was not so bad as it might have been, and was not nearly so bad as that "other past" of which he had almost ceased to think at all, knowing that "that," at any rate, could never come back. This later past had worried him sometimes, but it could not trouble him now, for it had been left behind.

Ah, could he have known that, instead of being left behind, it had preceded him to America, what an annoyance it might have become ! Not that it would have troubled him much, had it not been for Alice, in whom he was rapidly finding the something for which he had always yearned, and which, never before, had come to him. In Alice he thought that he saw a prospect of that supremest of all happinesses, which can come to such a man as he—a refined, high-bred lady-wife. Other loves he had known in his life abroad, but not such love as this might be. The loves of the past were not the kind to satisfy the desires of this refined gentleman, with his æsthetic tastes and courtly manners ; they were but

freaks of foolish youth, and now, in his manhood, he realized what they really were.

Could he have left them undone, he would gladly have done so; but he was well out of them now, and why should they trouble him? "Be sure your sin will find you out;" he had heard this often, had even applied it, to fit the case of a poor defaulting clerk, whom he had caught in the act, and afterwards forgiven out of tenderness of heart. He had told this young man to remember the injunction, but to apply it to himself had never seemed an appropriate thing to do. And he was right: his sins would never find him out, and why should they? He was truly penitent and intended to sin no more; and, surely, the little sins of his youth might be allowed to remain as they were, since he meant to so sin never again, and was, in general, a noble-intentioned fellow, who would be of more good than harm in the world. Could he have seen the future, with what terrible force would the words have rung in his ears. But no one ever foresees the outcome of his deeds; and so we proceed, in the belief that *our* sins, at least, are safely housed in oblivion. There is no writ-

ing on the wall, even in an unknown tongue, to warn us, and we go fearlessly on, until the storm bursts, and then we wonder why we should be thus harshly used by Fate.

The summer days were come and the Dojere family were gone ; that is, they were comfortably housed, in their cottage, at Long Branch. Mr. Dojere was with them at night, but he spent his days in the office, for to do nothing was not to his liking.

Albert was, part of the time, at the Branch, and had become one of the lions of the place, especially in the estimation of certain ladies, themselves settled, who would have been pleased to see their daughters settled also—that is, if the “catch” were a good one. But their angling was unsuccessful, so far as Albert was concerned. He would not “bite ;” and Alice, who had, by this time, discovered that she liked him very well, found herself wondering when he would declare himself ; for she knew now, by the subtle instinct of womanhood, that Albert loved her.

Once, indeed, he had almost done so. They had been riding, in the dusk, along the beach.

and had driven back, later, into the country, away from the lights and display, which make the Branch a pleasant place for those who are in love, but not retired enough for those who wish to hear the thrilling words of love's first outspeakings, and he had become very tender. They were, in fact, talking of marriage.

"Do you really think that fidelity in marriage, once established, is sure to remain through all changes of time and circumstance?" he said.

"I think that must depend upon the way in which the fidelity is obtained," said Alice. "Of course, I cannot speak for others, with certainty. I think that, for myself, if I once really loved a husband, I never could become unfaithful to him in any way ; and, by faithful, I mean more than is meant in the words of the ordinary service. I mean faithful to my belief in his goodness, his love for me, his purity of soul, in all that is of him—in short, I know of but one thing which could ever turn me from a man I truly loved. If I should ever find that he had lied to me—that he had deceived me in his wooing—that, I think, would turn my heart against him. He might commit sins against another ; I would go

with him even to the gallows ; but if I knew that he had lied to me, I could no longer trust him, and I know not what I might do. Anything is preferable to a marriage born of a lie."

"I agree with you, Alice," said he. "There is nothing which will kill affection like a lie. I know it from experience, and the silent sorrow of those whom I know to be suffering from the curse of a discovered lie, is to me one of the most touching sorrows of earth. To know that the one being who is dearer than all the universe, to whom we have given our whole trust, in whose keeping we have deposited our happiness, has been to us a living lie, is to know that which wears out the heart and crushes the soul. Happy is the man who has escaped this torment."

His voice trembled and he spoke with a fervor which touched his hearer, like the confession of a soul-sick penitent.

Alice found herself wondering what his past life might have been, and whether he might not be speaking from his own experience, so bitterly did his words sound.

He continued, "It is the hardest of sorrows to bear, for one must bear it in silence. The hus-

band who has been deceived by a false wife can hope for no relief in confidence with another. He cannot ask the woman, whom he later finds to be the one being necessary to his happiness, to be his wife, for, if she knows the truth she will not have him, and if he tells her not, he is a liar, and sooner or later she may find it out, and ruin will come to both. Her confidence he dares not invite, so he suffers in silence, and sees the paradise which may never be his, as Moses gazed upon the promised land, wherein he might never dwell."

"But," said Alice, "supposing that he should find a woman willing to hear his tale, and with heart large enough and faith sufficient to share his past sorrow with him, one who, knowing all, could not be deceived as to the past, would he not then be doing right in wedding her, provided she was in all respects what he really loved?"

"If she would but listen to him, yes. But, Alice, where is such a woman to be found? A woman willing, for the sake of love and right, to bear the stinging tongue of gossip, the averted eye, the aside remark, and all else that the world inflicts upon the unfortunate?"

"I do not know," said she, "but it seems to me that I, loving as I must love the man to whom I give myself, would bear all this and more, should he find me worthy of him."

Albert was almost at the point of telling her how he loved her. A minute more and the fatal moment would have come—fatal to her as well as to him. But a carriage approached just then, and in it were Mrs. Vanderhoof and her daughter, society people at the Branch, who bowed politely to Albert and his companion, who returned the salutation as the carriage passed.

The spell was broken and Alice was saved. Would that the omen had been heeded. Would that Albert had seen, in the interruption of his intention, the warning, and, remembering the injunction, "Be sure your sin will find you out," had dismissed marriage, forever, from his thoughts. Would that he had prayed from the bottom of his heart, "deliver us from evil," "lead us not into temptation."

CHAPTER V.

“ Man’s love is of man’s life a thing apart ;
’Tis woman’s whole existence.”

“ A change came o’er the spirit of my dream—
The wanderer was alone as heretofore,
The beings which surrounded him were gone,
Or were at war with him; he was a mark
For blight and desolation, compassed round
With hatred and contention.”

“IN the midst of life we are in death.” In our moments of supremest joy, when all nature seems to be kind to us, and when care seems to be but a phantom of the past, then it is, that grim Fate suddenly presents herself, and, holding the cup of hemlock to our lips, bids us drink it to the dregs. Icarus, joyously parting the cool ether of morning with his waxen wings, realizes not, that, at the rising of the Sun, his wings will melt from his shoulders, and he and his transient pleasure be dashed into the sea. Paris, bearing away in triumph the captive Helen, little thinks that he is soon to see his city in ashes, and the

sword of vengeance hanging above his head. Cæsar little expected to receive, as the climax of his conquests, the merciless thrusts of Brutus' cold steel ; and Abraham Lincoln, after spending the best years of his life in working for the welfare of his fellow men, little thought that the end of it all, for him, would be the assassin's bullet. Close upon pleasure comes pain ; joy cometh in the morning, but, at evening, the winds rise and the storm-clouds burst. Such is the experience of a majority of mankind.

Albert Thornbury was intoxicated with love. At last he had found the peerless woman, who would be his wife. A woman highly cultivated, noble in soul, pure in heart, and free from the pruderies which disgust a man of sense, and wiser, in her eighteen years of life than most women in their matronage. She could be won ; he knew it. All that remained was to ask her to be his wife, and his happiness would be secure.

The dark shadow which hung over his past, should trouble him no more. She would hear his story and love him better for it. He would not marry her with a lie upon his lips ; that was a thing against which his whole nature revolted.

She would know all, and she would love him. He had found the priceless jewel at last, "the one virtuous woman," and the past should be forever sealed.

Filled with these delicious dreams, he walked alone upon the sands at midnight, enjoying the calm solitude of the sea.

He did not notice a person, who had followed him, in the darkness, until, as he turned in his course, he came face to face with her. The figure stepped in front of him to get his attention, and, throwing back its hood, gazed upon him with a pair of magnificent dark eyes. The face was pale and somewhat careworn, but, nevertheless, beautiful.

Albert stopped, transfixed by the sight of this woman risen from the dead. "His hair stood erect and his voice stuck in his throat." The woman did not address him at once, but gazed fixedly into his face. At last, his voice came to him, and a groan of anguish escaped his lips. The woman shuddered, and, after a moment's pause, spoke.

"Are you not even a little bit glad to see me?" she said. "Not even enough to say that

you wish me no evil, further than that I have brought upon myself." She paused for a reply, but none came. "Oh, Albert," she added, in a more humble tone, "have you not even a feeling of pity for me? You loved me dearly once. Surely, you can, at least, pity me."

Albert spoke: "Pity you. Yes; but what brings you here from the grave, in which you were laid, ten years ago? Surely you can not be the person you seem. She is dead: dead ten years."

"I know you thought me dead, Albert," said the woman, "but I am not. I have been near you all these ten years, but did not dare let you know it, fearing your terrible anger, and yearning for your love."

"My love, Cora. My love! Is it thus you speak of that, which you held light as gossamer, selling it and my honor for a worthless bauble, cheapening it in the sight of men, and damning it in the sight of God. Woman, talk not to me of your yearning for my love."

"But you did love me," pleaded the woman.

"Aye, I loved you," he replied bitterly, "loved you with the mad feverishness of my youth, pic-

tured you a saint, when you were a devil, worshipped your beauty as priceless, when it could have been purchased with a trinket, loved your presence as that of an angel, when it was as baneful as the fatal aconite which the ignorant traveler plucks on the hillside. Loved you ! Yes, God knows I loved you, and he alone knows how much you valued it ! ”

“Your words are severe, but not unjust,” said the woman. “All that you say that I did, I have done ; and I have met you, to-night, in order to tell you more than you already know, and to plead for mercy, at your feet. I know that you will hear me, for you were always a just man.”

“Speak on.”

“I won’t detain you long, Albert,” she said. “You thought that I was dead, and I intended to have you think so. From the hour that I fled from your home, with that villain, I was sorry for the sin I had committed. Oh, believe me, Albert, when I say that I am now telling you the truth. You thought I had dishonored you, but that was not so. It might have been so, but God, in his mercy, prevented it. In our flight we started for France, and, during the ride to

Dover, I had time to think over what I was about to do, and to repent in time. Believe me, Albert, I am telling the truth. At Dover, I left the Count. In the crowd, at the station, I slipped away from him, and fled, fled as for my very life, and, from that day to this, I have never seen him. I was saved from dishonor, but not from disgrace, and I knew that you would not forgive me, nor even hear me, should I return. All these long years, I have waited, hoping that I might find opportunity to tell you all, and be forgiven, for I have loved you, all these years, as only a self-ruined woman can love the noble husband, whom she has wantonly wronged—but the opportunity never came. To-night I have found courage to face you and to plead my cause. If you would only believe me, Albert, all might be mended in this new country. I loved you so much that I desired you to think me dead, but my heart yearns so, to be loved by you again, that I can not, oh I can not, let you go! I caused the publication of the notice of my death, that you might see it, and not suffer on my account."

"May the curse of Almighty God be upon you,

for that deed !” came slowly and wrathfully from the man’s lips.

“ Oh, Albert, curse me not ! Have I not cursed myself enough already ? Is it not enough, that all these years, I should suffer alone, in anguish of heart ? I have known want, poverty, distress, cold, hunger and thirst, the barrenness of the unloved heart, the carking care of loving you in my sin-sick soul with a love, I could not kill. I never loved Count Miguel. It was but a momentary fit of insanity, and, wrongfully as I acted, I checked myself in time to save your honor. God knows, I do not seek to condone my own offence, but, oh Albert, the expiation has been long and terrible, and I can bear it no more ! Kill me here, on these sands, beside the great water, but tell me that your love is not all dead, that I may hope for some ray of light, after this terrible penance. Can you not forgive me, and let me hope that you will take me back ? ”

“ I can forgive you, but I can never love you again.”

A piteous moan came from the woman’s lips and she fell before him, upon her knees. Albert looked at her. Yes, she was very beautiful—

more beautiful, perhaps, than Alice. Ah ! there it was ; Alice. He could not help telling himself that, had this woman returned sooner, she might have been successful in her endeavors to win him back. But Alice now held his heart.

“Albert, is this all that I can hope for ? Is the sin, which was only in intention, never to be wiped out ? Can you not tell me that you will try to love me again ? I care not what you do to me, if you will but take me back to your heart. I’ll work for you, live only for you ; I’ll be your slave—anything—for, as God is my witness, here, in the solitude of the night, I love you, as women seldom love. Oh, husband, take me back to your heart !”

“I can not.”

She groveled at his feet, in anguish of remorse and despair ; she prayed, alternately, to God and to this man, to give her back the heart, which she had thrown away,—but all in vain. Love her he did, at one time, but now he loved Alice, and there was no room in his heart for this other. He did not doubt her story. He believed her to be telling the truth, and he hated her for it. She was his wife, and no law

could rid him of her. A year ago he would, no doubt, have taken her back, but his heart had no room for her now. She had come too late.

He left her groveling, in her wretchedness, on the shore of the sea, and disappeared in the darkness, cursing the fate which had thus turned his nectar into gall, his paradise into a hell. He never gave one pitying thought to the creature, who lay prostrate upon the sand, writhing in her anguish, and calling upon Heaven to witness, that she had told the truth.

She had, it is true, done him a wrong ; but was it so bad a deed, as never to be forgiven or condoned ? Such is often the lot of woman. Cæsar said, "The wife of Cæsar must be above suspicion ;" and was this to mean that, in the case of this woman, the punishment for not being above suspicion, was to be as great as that meted out to the gross offender, who has sinned without repentance ? Her sin had been repented of, and left uncommitted. It was only a thought of sin. Yet she was to suffer all the penalty of the sin, and never to see hope of forgiveness. Her fate indeed was hard. She did not know why it was that her husband could not love her

again. She did not know that another had taken the place, which had been vacant for ten long years, and which, but for that other, might have become her place again. She did not know that she had come too late. Pity her, all you who are not so sodden with worldliness, or over-filled with false saintliness, that you cannot pity, but only judge, the fallen; pity her, for she is worthy of your commiseration. Her sin has been small, her punishment is terrible,—because she is a woman.

CHAPTER VI.

“ A wife is like an unknown sea;
Least known to him who thinks he knows
Where all the shores of promise be,
Where lie the islands of repose,
And where the rocks that he must flee.”

“ The Cardinal rose with a dignified look,
He called for his candle, his bell and his book !

* * * * *

Never was heard such a terrible curse.

But, what gave rise

To no little surprise.

Nobody seemed a penny the worse ! ”

THE thoughts, which were the companions of Albert Thornbury in his room, that night, must remain unrecorded. The return, as from the dead, of that woman, his wife, had awakened all the memories of the past, and set his thoughts going backward over his life, as he had believed they never could again.

His was the case of many, the case of a young man who had made a mistake. Loving, with the unquestioning ardor of youth, he had married Cora Tate. Captivated by her houri-like beauty,

and the charm of her voice, heard for the first time in the opera, and often afterwards in the drawing-room, he had made her his wife. Their union had been peaceful, until the business cares of the London house of Dojere & Co. had taken so much of his time, that he could not be her constant companion, and she had unwisely begun to accuse him of neglecting her. Matters went from bad to worse, the presence of the dashing Count Miguel, a gray-haired sinner who had taken a passing fancy for Cora, aiding much to bring about a rupture between husband and wife; until, one night, stung by her sharp tongue, Albert had lowered himself from his dignity to say that which should have been left unsaid, and, that night, Cora left his home, and he had never again heard of her until he saw the announcement of her death in the newspapers. Then he was touched with a feeling of regret that he had been so hasty with his wife, for he felt that a little forbearance might have kept her his own, and now that she was dead, he loved her more than ever. He had always cherished in his memory a tender recollection of her, as she was, when his bride, and he felt that he

might have even forgiven her, had she returned to him penitent.

He intended never to marry again. But she was dead. Ten years had elapsed since he had seen her, and men forget much in ten years, particularly in matters of love. So, in falling in with Alice, it was not strange that he should find that he had changed his mind, and might become a husband once more.

In Alice he had found something superior to that which had charmed him in Cora, a soul akin with his own in thought, a mind refined and cultured like his own, and his love for her had become the great passion of his life ; for it is possible, let poets say what they may, that a man may love with a deeper passion at middle age than in early life. It is not always in youth that one finds the wife who is to be to him the partner whom his manhood will desire. The pretty girl who seems to him at twenty an angel of beauty, may fall far short of filling his cravings at forty. What does youth know of the aims, ambitions, tastes and hopes of manhood ? Can he be certain that the girl, so beautiful in her ball-dress, so sweet at the picnic, so lovely

in the first months, perhaps years, of married life, when all is bright, when cares are few and ambition is a thing unknown, will be the helpmate of his sterner years, the sharer of his cares and ambitions, the confidant of his purposes and hopes? Does he not often find, as the years go on, that the angel whom he thought so noble, has, after all, but the minimum of a soul, the semblance of an intellect, that she is no more capable of understanding his mind than a child, that she can have no sympathy with him in his life-work, and no interest in his ambitions beyond that expressed by bread-and-butter, or, perhaps, by display and fine clothes? How many men find it worth their while to try to interest their wives in their business, profession, or whatever it may be that is the life of their living, the food of their body and mind? Many do, at the start, no doubt, but how many are they, who, finding no responsive chord there, give up the hopeless task and go their way alone. Their name is legion. The man comes home burdened with the cares of his profession or trade; he has won his case, his article has been accepted, he has at last completed that machine which is to

revolutionize a branch of industry, he has conquered that stubborn case of sickness—in a word, with the one thing which makes life grander than mere existence, fresh in his mind, and tells his wife of his success. It may be that heavy cares are upon his aching mind, which he had determined to lay aside for the time, while he tells her only of his good fortune. He tells her all about it, with the declamatory ardor of an exalted soul. “Yes, dear,” she says, “it’s very nice ; but I do wish that Sara might have a new cloak ; the one she is wearing is positively shabby ; and, by the way, the plumber called for his money to-day,” or she responds with some equally high-toned and agreeable thing. And this is all he gets, and all he ever will get. She has lost her charm. She has not grown any during all these years of life, while he has gone far ahead. She may have been too much burdened with children and cares, to have had time for improvement, but the fact remains. She is not his companion, she can never be. He has made a mistake.

In Alice, Albert had found a mind, akin to his own. She was much younger in years than he, to be sure, but she had what the girl at the pic-

nic has not. At eighteen she had become well educated and knew as much as he did, with his seven and thirty years, of those things, which broaden the understanding, and make further development a matter of course. She was a fit companion for his manhood, and he loved her—loved her as men love, who have made mistakes, and have learned to profit by them, knowing the difference between painted and solid substances, the difference between eyes that merely sparkle with beauty, and eyes behind which lies a cultivated mind, knowing the difference between school-girl tattle and conversation, between society polish and a developed intellect. He loved her and had made up his mind to marry her, when, like a change of scene in a pantomime, appeared the wife of the past; and the wife of the future, the wife for whom his heart yearned, began to vanish out of sight, and the vision of what might have been was all that he had remaining. Cursed by a mistake, like thousands of others, he read his doom, and it both saddened and maddened him.

When the morning came, Alice received a note from him, telling her that he had been compelled

to go to the city on business and enclosing his compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Dojere.

“Business?” said Mr. Dojere, “I don’t know what business could call him off like that. Le’me see, le’me see,” puffing out his cheeks and snapping his fingers, “there is nothing at the office to call him. Hum, ho ! I say, Alice,” added the old man, winking at her, “couldn’t you post us as to the cause of his absence?”

Alice blushed at the blunt remark, and made answer in the negative, so plainly, and with such evident truthfulness, that Mr. Dojere was convinced that he had made a mistake, so he dropped the matter, and, after breakfast, went to the city himself.

Mr. Dojere was right. There was no business which should call Albert to town that day. Alice wondered, that morning, what it could be, which had taken him so suddenly away. The thought that he had told an untruth, even a little one, such as the letter might contain, never entered her head. After hearing his opinion of liars, last night, she could not think that he would lie, even in so small a way as that. He *could* not lie. So the girl decided to wait for expla-

nations, until he should be ready to give them, a method of disposing of a doubt, which it would be well for most people to adopt, and to amuse herself for the day, by a visit to some friends farther down the beach.

Mr. Dojere bothered his brains, not a little, over Albert's sudden whim, as he called it, being always, more or less, interested in other folk's business as well as his own, and not having any of his own to trouble him, just then. This was a failing of Mr. Dojere. He was opinionated, stubborn, quick to form judgments, and "pokey" as the New Englanders term it, although good-hearted and just at bottom. And if there was any one thing which Mr. Dojere did dislike more than another, it was mystery. So he bothered his brains. He knew that there was no business, which could call Albert away; but, when he arrived at his office, he found that there was some business, which was not part of that laid out in his day-book of "matters to be attended to," something which made the old man thoroughly angry, and made him very unpleasant company for the clerks. During the night, the place had been robbed, and a quantity of fine laces,

just imported, were gone. No one knew how it happened, and Mr. Dojere was excited and angry.

Albert, who was there before Mr. Dojere, had been investigating the matter, but without success. The goods were gone, and that was all that was known about it. Mr. Dojere was in a state of mind, which would have found relief in discharging every man in the place, but, not being quite fool enough to do that, he "went for" Albert, as the boys say, in his bluntest style, with a subject which had nothing whatever to do with the robbery.

"Say, Thornbury," said he, "what did you want to go off last night in such a fashion as that for, and then send a lying note about it?"

Albert never became angry, when Mr. Dojere was mad. He merely looked at his partner, and although his face flushed with anger at the insult, he made no reply whatever, but took up his hat and left the room.

"Hum !" said the old man, "fine set of fellows I've got 'round here. Le'me tell you, there's got to be an improvement in this place before long, or I'll know why."

And he settled himself down for a day of first-class dudgeon, and a day of sorry hard-times for the clerks, who could not afford, like Albert, to take their hats and leave, until the storm should have passed.

Albert went about, during the day, thinking much over his strange predicament and cruel fate. He loved her and knew that she loved him. In fact he had already shown her, he feared, that he loved her, and she would expect a fuller declaration from him, soon. Should he tell her the truth, the whole truth, and trust her nobility of mind to judge him fairly? It would be a hard thing to do. To tell the woman, to whom he had only half-proposed, that the reason he could not marry her was that he was already married. Had he any warrant for telling her this? Perhaps not ; but, on the other hand, he knew that she would expect something from him. He could not bear the thought of having her believe him a male-flirt, that most contemptible of all two-legged creatures. What to do he did not know. He could not flee altogether. Society would gossip. He was in sore distress, but he made up his mind to do one thing anyhow.

He would return to the Branch, and let things take their own course.

Better would it have been for him, had he decided to face the gossips' fire. Better a thousand times, had he fled forever from the land. But who ever knows what is best for him, in this world of doubts and dilemmas? And Albert was but one of us, a mortal, with all a mortal's liability to err in judgment. He returned to the Branch, and took up his quarters, explaining his letter to Alice, by stating that his business was finished, and she had too much sense to care to ask, what might have been the nature of his sudden call. It was a lie which he had told her, a lie indefinite, but none the less a lie. Oh man ! how well thou canst preach ! How poorly dost thou practice !

CHAPTER VII.

"Gold! gold! gold! gold!
Bright and yellow, hard and cold,
Spurned by the young, but hugged by the old,
To the very verge of the churchyard mold;
Price of many a crime untold;
Gold! gold! gold! gold!"

"Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand
Henceforward in thy shadow. Nevermore
Alone upon the threshold of my door
Of individual life, I shall command
The uses of my soul."

ISAAC ROSENBAUM was in his shop. Not that Isaac was ever to be found anywhere else, but in his shop, or that he was ever known to go out of it, but Isaac was in his shop, and what is more to our interest, he had in his shop with him, two things, which are to figure in our story. Isaac had many other things in his shop. He had one of the finest collections of real bric-a-brac, in the city; he had everything in the decorative art line of goods, from a broken tea-pot of, it might be, pre-Adamite times (at least he

would have so dated it, if, by so doing, he could have made it sell) to a modern twenty-five-cents-by-the-yard oil painting ; he had stores of clothes, ancient and modern ; he had weapons enough, and of styles sufficient, to have equipped anything from a knight templar to a St. Patrick's parade-day marshal ; he had a wealth of old iron, brass, copper and lead ; he had bottles and Bibles, linen and leather, pewter and porcelain, silk and shoddy, pipes and pistols, muslins and machinery ; and he also had diamonds and rubies, silver and gold. In short, Isaac Rosenbaum was one of that most shrewd yet ignorant, untasteful yet discriminating, dirty, "low-down," much sought, and everywhere abused, class of men, a Chatham street pawn-broker. Isaac was very old, nobody knew how old, for he had been in that shop, as long as anybody thereabout could remember. His form was bent and shrunk by age, his beard was long and as white as snow, and the eyes, which shone from beneath his shaggy gray brows were piercing and black, and cunning, with the alertness of wary old age.

Isaac was not attending to business on this night, when we first make his acquaintance. He

was doing something which he had done, time and time again, during eighteen years ; he was reading a letter, the same letter which he had read over and over, for eighteen years, wondering if the time would ever come, when this letter could be converted into the only value which it, or anything else, had in his eyes,—money. He had kept this letter a long time, hoping to find its owner ; not with any intention of delivering it, because it was the proper thing to do so, but, in the hope, that the unknown owner might be glad to get possession of it, by paying a good price. Isaac knew little, almost nothing, concerning the letter, but he knew enough to see money in it for Isaac. The contents of the letter awakened, in his heart, no feeling of sentiment for the writer or the other parties mentioned in it, but he often read it over, probably, at first, in a vain search for a clue to its mission of usefulness for him, and now, more from habit than anything else. It was the first piece of business which had never proved to be lucrative, and he was not satisfied to have it remain so long unproductive. He felt as if he were being swindled.

A shadow darkened the doorway of the dirty shop, and a woman entered noiselessly, but quickly. Isaac, seeing a customer, laid the letter upon the counter, and, for the first time in his life, forgot that he had not returned it to its hiding-place. The errand of the woman was a common enough one, yet Isaac, venerable flint-heart though he was, could not help but notice that this customer was very beautiful. He had had many beautiful customers before, but not one who seemed so beautiful as this creature. She laid a ring upon the counter and simply said "How much?" The old man took the trinket (he could have shown her many more like it in his safe, all pledges of that love which is said to endure until death) and, turning about, threw it into a scale, weighing it with care.

As the woman stood there waiting, her eye fell upon the letter which lay upon the counter, and she caught a name written there. The thought was quick as the glance, and, not knowing, really, why she did it, she softly took the letter and hid it in her dress. Isaac made her an offer for the ring, a villainously meagre price she knew, but she took the money and hurriedly left the shop.

The rage of ten thousand demons, robbed of a sinner's soul, could scarcely equal that of Isaac, when, a moment later, he perceived that his letter had been stolen. What is there more indignant than a plundered thief? Isaac had been robbed. He knew it at once: knew that the woman had stolen his letter, the letter which he had carefully guarded eighteen years, the letter which was to fill his coffers, at small cost, the one investment, which had never yet proved productive. She had taken it, and, going beyond the truth, he, at once, inferred that she had come for the purpose of taking it. His wrath and terror were pitiable, although worthy of contempt. The Jew had been out-Jewed. The usurer had been "taken in and done for." Isaac felt so wroth that he closed the place, an hour before time, that night.

While Isaac was venting his impotent wrath upon the senseless old garments, which draped the walls of the den behind his shop, the woman, whose wedding ring he had just taken in pawn, was reading, with eager eyes and blanched face, the letter which she had stolen. She had taken it, in a sudden impulse, born of the sight of two

words, which had drawn her attention to it, and, now that she had made out its contents, she was filled with many conflicting emotions. This letter would be of value to "him," perhaps; that it was intended by the writer to be sent to him, there could be no doubt in her mind. It told him that which he did not know, and which he ought to know, and it also told her that, which made her heart sick and her brain reel. Of a naturally jealous temperament, she hated a rival, even in imagination, and this letter told of one who might be a rival in reality, a rival widening the gap between herself and that almost hopeless goal, which she had suffered penance ten years to reach. This was one aspect of the case, as presented by the inferences, which she drew from the letter. But there was also another suggested to her by this stolen letter. It might be that this, instead of weakening her cause with her husband, could be made to strengthen it. If she could only trace out the mystery, which the letter showed was yet to be solved, might it not be, that Albert, in his gratitude to her, for her unselfish love and willingness to condone his past offences, would love her once more and take her again to his heart?

A wild throb of hope leaped in this woman's breast, at the thought. She was not a bad woman, as women go, merely a shallow one, but, unlike most shallow women, capable of powerful passion and great love. Perhaps, she thought, this letter might be made to work for her own welfare, and win back her lost husband. She resolved not to deliver the letter at once, but to solve its mystery herself, and then go to him with it, and plead at his feet. Little did she think, what the result of her search would reveal, and little did she dream of the terrible *denouement*, in which this hidden tragedy would end.

"Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad." Better would it have been had they destroyed Cora Tate in the madness of her love, before she could have obtained that letter.

The more old Isaac thought over the theft of the letter, the more uneasy he became. So long as he kept the letter in his possession he had nothing to fear, but, now that it had fallen into the hands of an unknown person, and one who, he believed, knew more about it than he, his fear of punishment (an apology for conscience in him, as in many other folk) began to be very

disagreeable. Knowing so much, yet so little, concerning this letter, he could form no conception of what the result of its loss might be to himself. He had intended to make capital of the letter, if opportunity should ever come, but he never had had any intention of letting it go out of his hands, until he had made himself secure. The shrewd old rascal had been outwitted, and this letter, stolen in the dead of the night, from a corpse, years before—this letter, which he had been detaining, in the hope that it might be the means of bringing him gain, through the misery of others, was, perhaps, to bring danger to him and gain to another. Old Isaac was in a quandary. He enjoyed a mystery, provided it was no mystery to him, and he held the solution in his hands; but he had serious objections to being a part of an unsolved problem. Isaac, for the first time in many years, was afraid. “Thus conscience (or an apology for it) doth make cowards of us all.”

CHAPTER VIII.

“Had it pleased Heaven
To try me with affliction; had he rained
All kinds of sores, and shames, on my bare head;
Steeped me in poverty to the very lips;
Given to captivity me and my utmost hopes;
I should have found in some part of my soul
A drop of patience: but, alas, to make me
A fixed figure, for the time of scorn
To point his slow unmoving finger at !—”

“I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn as you
Have done to this.”

MR. DOJERE was up to his eyes in business. Thornbury had been much at the Branch, and was supposed to be enjoying Alice's company. He certainly was in her company much of the time, but a reader of his inner life, if such a reader could have been found, would have found it difficult to assert that he was enjoying himself. His was an infatuation, which boded no good to himself, or to Alice. Loving her madly, yet knowing that he must never let it be known,

yearning for the boon which could never become his, he hovered about her, like the moth about the candle-flame, differing from the moth, in that he knew his danger, yet, like the moth, unable to break away from the fatal brightness. He lingered about her, loving her in silence, yet thinking to avoid doing harm; and Alice loved him—loved him as only women of the highest type can love.

The time wore on, and Mr. Dojere was busy with a business new to him—thief hunting. He had employed detectives, and was filled with a bull-dog determination to find out how the robbery had been committed, and by whom.

“I tell you what, Thornbury,” he said, “le’ me tell you, I will get to the bottom of this thing, or my name isn’t John Dojere. If there is any one thing I hate more than anything else, by thunder, it’s a mystery! I’ve had one mystery in my life, and one is enough. There was my wife’s sister, daughter of Luke Morton, now dead, disappeared one night years ago, and never was heard of since. Killed her mother and the old man, too, and made Sara as miserable as if she had lost me (perhaps more so); and, by Jove, I

don't like mystery. Here's this robbery, committed right under our noses—doors and windows all right, yet the place robbed; and, le' me tell you, my son, I will know how it happened."

And he did know, sooner than he expected, and not with the result for which he had hoped.

As the old man sat in his office, late in the day, one of his thief-hunters entered, and closed the door.

"What do you want?" said Mr. Dojere. "More money, to go on with your make-believe detective work? I'll give you one more installment, but, after that, let me tell you, my friend, no more money, until the goods are delivered."

The man took a seat. "I have found some of the lost lace," he said.

Mr. Dojere was interested thoroughly, now. "Where?" said he.

"In a fence's place in Chatham street. The old Sheeney, who has got the stuff, was scared, when I charged him with receiving it, at night, through his back alley door, and, when I told him a few more things, he owned up; but he would not give me the cue, to get the fellow who stole the goods. Said he would give up the

lace, but not the man, unless you came personally and asked him to."

"What's he act like that for?" said Mr. Dojere. "I'll soon make him give up his thief. I'll go there with you, to-night."

That night Mr. Dojere and the officer went to old Isaac's shop, and Mr. Dojere identified his stolen property. He then demanded that Isaac should surrender the thief. Isaac seemed loth to do so, but Mr. Dojere threatened him with immediate arrest, if he did not comply with his request. The old Jew's eye glowed, with a strange light, when he made an arrangement that Mr. Dojere and the officer should conceal themselves, in his shop, at 1 o'clock, that night. That was the hour, he said, when the thief would come with the rest of the stolen lace, for part of it was still missing.

At the appointed time Mr. Dojere and his man were ready, concealed in the shop, awaiting the coming of their prisoner that was to be. Mr. Dojere was beginning to enjoy the affair.

They had not long to wait. In a moment, a slight sound was heard without; old Isaac unbolted the back door and a man entered, bearing

a bundle. It was the remainder of the stolen lace. Isaac stepped back, and the man laid the bundle upon the counter, and opened it; then, turning about, revealed to Mr. Dojere, who had just come forth from his hiding-place, the well-known features of his own son Joe, clerk in the office of his father, and future member of the firm of Dojere & Co., the house of many years standing and untarnished reputation.

Mr. Dojere gazed at the young man, who was too much terrified to move, with a look of horror and disgust depicted on his sturdy countenance.

“Great God,” he muttered, “can this be my son !”

Long and fixedly he gazed upon the youth (the officer standing in readiness to seize the prisoner, at a signal,—old Isaac himself affected to silence by the work which he had done) and a shadow, like the grayness of death-pallor, fell upon his face. His son; the beloved son in whom he had been well pleased; the son of his old age, the babe of his early manhood, the son, to whom he looked for support in coming years; the son, upon whom he had intended to shower blessings, such as only the rich can give their

children; his son, his heir, his successor in that honorable house: his boy—a thief ! The terrible truth came flowing in upon his mind, like the rush of waters from a bursted lake sweeping through a fair valley, and he felt a strange sense of dread stealing upon him—dread for the future, dread for the past, and the present. He felt a fear of the truth, now, as great as had been his desire to know the truth an hour ago. His son was a thief, a mean, low-souled sneaking thief. He thought of his honor among men, of his pride in this boy, of his wife, that thief's mother,—and he thought of justice. A terrible conflict was now raging in his soul, a silent conflict, such as takes place only in the souls of "men of sterner stuff." So long he stood there, that the officer opened his mouth to speak, but Mr. Dojere silenced him with a sign. His thoughts were shaping themselves now, and becoming coherent.

This was his son; this was a thief. This was the boy whom his wife loved; this was a thief. This was the son, in whom had centered his best hopes and tenderest affections, in whom he had placed all confidence, and who was to be, some

day, entrusted with the care of that house of great business and honorable reputation; this was a thief. He thought of all these things and more. He thought of his wife, the mother; of Alice, the sister; of Albert, the friend; of himself, the father and employer; he thought of the law and of justice—and there came from his lips, as from the lips of an Abraham at the funeral pyre, gazing lovingly upon the face of his Isaac, the words, “It must be so: take him, officer, I will appear against him to-morrow.”

And the old gentleman passed out into the night,—the blackest night, which he had ever seen, and, with a blacker night in his heart, walked sturdily and sadly to his lonely home, where, God alone knows how he spent the hours until daylight.

True to his promise, the father appeared, next morning, against his son, and the magistrate bound the youth over for trial. The firmness of Mr. Dojere, under this trial, was something woeful to contemplate. Many men thought him harsh and unfeeling, bigoted and even cruel. They knew not the fire of anguish, which burned deep down in his soul, as he gazed at that

beloved son, whom he was delivering up to the stern hands of justice and law. But Mr. Dojere was a peculiar man, one of the sort, who could bear the gnawing of the fox at his vitals and still be calm, and so he bore the comments of his fellow men, without retort, and suffered in silence. Wrong-headed it may be, but true to his principles. Had Joe been any other clerk in the house, his treatment would have been the same; no worse, no better.

This sad disclosure put an end to the stay of the family at the Branch, and the mother and sister returned to a saddened home. The hardest part of Mr. Dojere's trial was yet to come, and, hard as it was, he bore it calmly and firmly. The pleading of the mother for her son, the supplications of the girl, whom he so dearly loved, praying, with tearful eyes, for the brother, were hard to endure, but he bore them. Almighty God, administering the sentence of doom to the rebellious angels, could not have been more firm in the sad solemnity of his stern, final judgment. Thornbury entered his plea for the unfortunate Joe, but it was a vain appeal. Joe was a criminal, and no less a criminal, because

he was the son of the man against whom he had sinned. Should the judge upon the bench refuse to pass sentence on his guilty and convicted son, Mr. Dojere would not have admitted that any judge had a right so to do, and it was not right that he should shield the guilty, and, because it was not right, he would not do it. It sundered his very heart strings to thus decide, but it was just, and justice must be done. And so the luckless Joe, gay and foolish, once light-hearted and free, was confined in jail, to await the dreaded trial which should make him a branded felon, and forever blast his life prospects, while his mother and sister sat silent, in dumb terror, and his father went about his business, with the vulture at his heart and his silent sorrow eating the life from his soul.

CHAPTER IX.

"Should
A serpent tell me, with a look like that,
There was no venom in his sting, I would
Believe him."

WHILE the senior member of the house of Djere & Co. was busy making money and hunting thieves, the younger member was playing a dangerous game. Albert, despite his resolve to avoid all danger, found himself unable to keep Alice from his thoughts, or to remain absent from her side. An irresistible fate seemed to draw him to her, which, battle against it as he might, was not to be conquered. The flame was bright, and the moth could not resist the temptation to singe his wings. Would that the metaphor were perfect, and that, in this case, it had been only the moth which could be injured. Alice was now deeply in love with Albert—a pure, womanly love, which only waited to be asked, and it would give its all to the well-being of the one whom it thought it had found wor-

thy. Albert knew this, and the thought of that other love, dead now, yet binding him with a galling, never-to-be-severed chain, maddened him.

At times he thought he would tell Alice all his history, and throw himself for mercy at her feet, and beg her to cast him off; but it was a difficult thing to do. More than once he had almost done this, but, at the crucial moment, his courage would fail. Without meaning to, he made love to her. How could it be otherwise, with two persons whose whole souls and tastes were akin? And Alice knew it—knew it by instinct—and waited with loving heart for more. She knew that he loved her, yet sometimes there would come over him fits of abstraction, which seemed unexplainable, and she would find herself distressed that she could not ask him to let her share his cares, and show him how much she would bear for him.

On one occasion, as they were riding along through a lonely region in silence, one of these fits came upon him, which distressed her so that she could no longer restrain herself from offering him her sympathy. The silence had been of long duration, and she said:

"Albert, my friend (what a tenderness was in her voice, although she strove to make it merely friendly), is there not some trouble brooding in your heart, some wrong, which a friend might share and bear with you, making the burden less burdensome to the heart which now bears it alone? I do not desire to intrude on your thoughts, but I have noticed that often, when with me, you become troubled, and I know that I am not the cause of this trouble, whatever it may be. If I were less your friend, I might think it is I who have displeased you, but true friends should not so judge the moods of their dear ones. It is only silly school-girls who thus take crude offense at imagined wrongs. If your trouble is one that a friend might share, let me be that friend."

Did ever manhood receive a truer tribute of love than this? Albert thought not, and the words and the tone of the speaker's voice fell, with telling power, upon his heart. He tried to make some commonplace answer, but the answer would not come. Such words as those just spoken did not admit of flippant reply. He was on the point of telling her all the truth, but the thought

came, that perhaps she might resent the insult which he had been offering her womanhood by his silent courtship, should he tell her how he had loved her, while belonging to another woman, and his courage failed him. Still, he was moved to secure her sympathy, so much did he yearn for it.

“Yes, Alice,” he replied, “there is a trouble weighing on my heart—a trouble so sore that, try as I will not to bear it about with me, it ‘will not down.’ It comes to me in the lone hours of the night; it often follows me by day, and, even in your entertaining (he had nearly said precious) company, it sometimes finds me out, and will not be dispelled. Like many another man, I bear with me a burden, which I alone can scarcely carry, and which another cannot share.”

“But, are you sure that no friend could, by his sympathy, make your burden less heavy? Could not the sacred fellowship of a true friend’s confidence become a solace in this sorrow or care, even though it might not kill the sorrow or remove the care?”

“I fear not, my friend. There are often

burdens in the soul of man, the sharing of which with another, might make them doubly weighty. Mine is such a burden. Begotten of no fault of mine, but only a mistake, it is mine to bear forever, blighting my dearest hopes and making my life at times, a thing, which I would sell, like Esau, for a mess of perishable pottage, could I but enjoy the price, and then die."

"You should not talk like that," she said. "It is not manly, and does not please me. If your trouble is of such a kind, as you say, bear it bravely, and hope for a brighter day, when it shall begin to be less of a burden. Live in your usefulness as a man, and find comfort in your friends. I do not ask you to tell that which must be hid in secret; whatever it be, I believe you, when you say that it is no fault of yours which blights your life, and I offer you my truest friendship now, if you will take it for what it is worth, a friendship which asks nothing which it is not your wish to give, and which believes in your honesty and trusts you. Surely men have had women friends, who were above the grade of those, who seek their opposites in sex, merely that they may gain their affections

later. Such a friendship I offer you, Albert. Will you accept it?"

How she loved this man, to whom she was proffering only friendship. She felt that he loved her and that, for some reason, she knew not what, he could not tell her so. But she meant what she had said, and was willing to have it so decreed, if it could never be otherwise. When he told her that he was blameless, she believed him, and would have scorned to question him. And he: blameless; yes, he knew that it was not his fault, that the dead had come to life, but, was he wholly blameless for his life, subsequent to that revelation, which had shown him that he could no longer think of Alice, but with sin? He feared that he was not, but he felt that he could not leave her.

"Alice," he said, his voice low and tender, "I accept your noble offer. I take your friendship. Let it be ever as the friendship of those, who, parting in death, hope to again clasp hands, in a happier and fairer land, than the one in which they part. Let it be a friendship true, unquestioning and eternal. I accept it, and may God bless you for it."

They spoke no more that night, but rode home in silence. Albert felt a sense of relief. That bond of friendship seemed to have placed a guard about Alice, which made it seem that he was a little nearer to the path of right than before. But she—she loved him, and she had not the consolation of knowledge to soothe her disturbed mind. So the compact was made, and they continued to make love, calling it friendship. “What’s in a name?” O fatal deceit that lies in ambiguity, whether it be of word or sense! These knew not even what friendship is.

Meanwhile came the dreadful news of the crime committed by Joe, and the family returned to the city, saddened by the disgrace, which had come upon them. Alice felt for her brother most keenly, and her pleadings with the stern old man, his father, were many and piteous, but they availed nothing. Driven by despair and sorrow she took her trouble to Albert, who had, also, done all in his power to save Joe from his father’s just severity. To Albert the grief stricken girl opened her heart and pleaded as Portia pleaded for Antonio, in a vain hope, that he might

win from his partner's rigorous heart, some touch of mercy. And Albert was moved by this woman's tears, as never woman had moved him before.

He promised her that, if it were a possible thing to do, he would save Joe from the disgrace of state prison. The trial was near at hand, and Mr. Dojere kept mostly by himself, staying late at his office and leaving the house early in the morning. His stout old heart was breaking, but no one knew it. Such natures as his must always suffer in silence.

Meanwhile the trial was approaching, and Joe had become certain that his doom was sealed. Thornbury kept his own counsel, and, only when he had solved the problem, made known his plans to Alice; and she, moved by her woman's heart, accepted them, and forgave her "friend," as he asked her to, for the wrong which he had done to please her.

So, one dark, rainy night, a boat landed on the lonely shore of Raritan Bay, and Joe, well disguised, and accompanied by Albert and Alice, stood upon the sands and clasped hands, for the last time, perhaps, upon earth. Joe had full directions and money from Albert, and this was to

be their last meeting. The morrow would see Joe fleeing for lands unknown, while the other two would return home, to pray for the erring one, and keep the secret.

Joe was free ; in a short time he would be beyond capture, and the state prison would never confine him within its walls. A woman's pity had saved him ; a friend's frailty had delivered him from punishment. Albert's money had bought him freedom. It could never buy back his reputation, it could never restore him to honor, but it had given him his liberty. He was free ; and Albert, the man of business honor, whom no man could have moved to do a dishonest deed, had bribed the jailor and set the prisoner free, because a woman had pleaded, with weeping eyes. That which he had done had been done for this woman, whom he called his "friend." Oh, Friendship, what will you not induce men to do when your *alias* is "Love !"

CHAPTER X.

“Woe! woe! ill-fated one! my last word this,
This only, and no more forevermore.”

“Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned.”

THE fall days were come, and things had relapsed into their former routine. The saddened household went about its customary rounds, and none of its members ever mentioned the name of the one who had brought disgrace upon its honorable name. The heart of the mother was sore, but she bore her trouble in silent patience, hoping for a day of forgiveness and the return of the prodigal. Mr. Dojere was, in his daily doings, the same as before, but he was never jolly now, as he had been at times in the past, and he had become stern in his manner and unsocial. Some natures are thus affected by grief or wrong. They never mellow under the hand of chastisement or the pain of sorrow, but harden into silent austerity. Alice was not altogether un-

happy, for she felt that brighter days would come, and was hopeful. She knew that she was beloved, and she trusted in the honor of this lover who, for some reason, could not tell his love. Albert behaved much as formerly, but his fits of abstraction were often upon him. He felt himself accursed, and began to look upon his wife as upon one who had no right to stand between him and his desires. He had pitied her at first; now he hated her. She had become his enemy, and he sometimes found himself wishing that she would die, and set him free. The wish was wicked, but it was a desire of nature and uncontrollable.

One evening he received a note. It was from Cora. With mingled thoughts he opened it. It was a request that he would call on her, just once, and she assured him that, after that, she would never trouble him again.

“You surely will not refuse a dying woman’s request?” the note said. It contained an address, in a miserable locality, and thither he went that night, feeling a sort of pity for the woman, now that she was nearing her end, and could not be a clog upon his freedom much longer. Thus

do we often forgive those who can no longer injure us. He found her in a wretched room, in her bed, with the pallor of final sickness upon her face. He entered and stood beside her couch, waiting for her to speak. She gazed at him long and earnestly.

"You do not hate me, now, Albert, do you?" she said.

"Hate you ; no, Cora. I hope that I have never done that. You wronged me once, but that is passed, now. You asked me to love you again, but I could not. It was not my fault ; I could not."

"But you will forgive me, Albert, I know you will. If you knew how I have yearned for you, all these long years, repenting the rash deed, which I did not do, yet, having thought to do it, must bear its penalty in full, you would be full of pity for me. You would love me a little, only just a little, perhaps, but you could not help loving me. I have suffered all that I can suffer for my sin,—I have lost your love. Sometimes I have thought my punishment too severe, unjust even, but God knows best about that. It is enough for me, to know that I have

lost your love, and that I have no hope in life. I did think, Albert, that I might, by true penitence, win you back. I thought that these weary years of silence and honest remorse might awaken your love again, and give you back to me. When I met you, that night, by the water, I had hope, and I saw that you believed my story ; but I did not know, then. I know it now. You could not love me, because you had learned to love another, and my coming was like a death-blow to your hopes. Do not look at me so ; I will not upbraid you, dear. She is, perhaps, better than I, but, oh Albert, she can never love you more dearly than I do now, sinful, weak, penitent and dying. But, Albert, she—that woman—”

“Please talk of something else.” The words were cold and cutting, and the woman shuddered.

“Albert, dear,” she continued, after a pause, “you must hear me, this time, because it will be the last, and because it is for your good, that I wish to speak to you. Oh do not refuse to hear me now, or you may regret it, all your life ! Albert, tell me truly ; have I guessed aright ? Do you love this Alice ?”

"Better than my own immortal soul," he murmured, scarcely knowing what he answered.

"I knew it, Albert ; my instinct guided me aright. You love Alice ; she is good and noble, but, oh my husband, when I am dead and gone, you must not wed that woman."

"Peace, woman !" the words came sternly and coldly. "Peace, I say !"

"I cannot obey you," she cried, rising in her couch, her face flushing with a fever redness. "I cannot hold my peace. Albert, by the love you once bore me, by the love I bear you now, I implore you,—a dying woman implores you,—Albert, not to love that woman. She must never be your wife. She cannot ! she shall not !"

"I tell you to hold your peace !" he cried. "Such as you shall not name her to me."

"O husband !" she cried, springing from the couch and throwing herself at his feet, her rich, dark hair flowing about her, "O my husband, hear me, hear me ! This must not be, Albert. Never could I rest in my grave, if such a thing were to come on you. I love you, Albert, love you better than you know, and you must not love her ; she—"

“Cease, accursed woman ! I will not listen to you.”

“Oh husband, curse me not ! I love you so. I have much to tell you yet, and if you will but hear me, you will cover my poor head with blessings, not curses, for the love I give you, when I might have been revenged for curse unjust. This Alice whom you love is not—”

“Will you obey me, or shall I leave you here, fleeing from the sound of your polluting voice ?”

“Hear me, Albert ! I will be brief. You cannot wed this woman, whom you love. I will not allow it ! I, your wife, forbid it ! She —”

With an oath, he flung her from him, and fled. She lay unconscious on the floor, a long time ; and, then, crawling feebly to her bed, lay down and thought. And as she thought, her love, cherished so long, began to grow cold and turn to hate. This man, whom she had loved all the long years, for whom she had suffered so much, whom she was willing to renounce forever, and to whom she had been ready to do a great service, this man had spurned her, had rejected the sacrifice, which she was about to make,—this man had scorned her, had cursed her ; and she

now began to hate him. And, as the hatred grew, its force came ever in increasing volumes of anathemas, until she hated him with a dangerous and vengeful hatred, which, had she been able to act, would have boded him no good. But she was sick and dying, while he was well and prosperous. She hated him now for that; she hated him for everything that was of him or near to him. And thus she lay in her lonely bed, hating the husband, whom she had loved so much during those ten long years.

When Albert, ashamed of his brutality, and sorry for his rashness, returned next morning to ask a more amicable farewell from the woman, who was, after all, his dying wife, he found that Cora was gone. No one about the place had seen her go out, and he could get no information of her whereabouts. He had come too late; like many another penitent of this earth, he had come too late, to save himself. He did not know it, but he felt unhappy, that he had parted thus, in anger, from the woman, who had been true to him, so many years, and whom he did pity, although he could not love her.

After this event, it is not strange that the

announcement of the finding of a woman's body, in the river, that night, attracted his attention, and that he went to the house of the unknown dead, as soon as possible, to see this drowned woman, whom no one knew. There she lay on the cold marble slab, what remained of a self-destroyed woman, driven to her doom by that most remorseless of all foes, circumstances, a foe against whom woman is less able to do battle than man. Her garments were shabby, but the form which they covered was shapely, and would well have displayed the best of raiment, and the face—Albert felt a chill, as he raised the cloth which hid it. A fair, sweet face, a calm, peaceful face now, whatever it may have been in life-expression, oval and clear of skin, and enshrouded in a wealth of rich dark hair. It was a beautiful face and Albert almost loved it again, now that it was his no more. Yes, it was Cora, beyond a doubt.

He told the attendant that he could give him no information about the dead. How could he bare his life to the cold public gaze, and what good would it do if he should do so? He had met her, he said, but could tell nothing of her

history, excepting that she had seemed friendless. But he would bear the expense of her burial. Of her death he knew nothing. This much he told, and no more.

As he walked homeward, all the past came back to him, from the day when, in his mad infatuation he had taken that fair woman to his heart, to this day, when he had found her, dead, in the morgue. He felt sorry that their final meeting had been such as it was—that they had parted in anger. A kindly parting would have been better. But it was over, and he was free. Free ! He felt that he must scream the word aloud, in the street. Free ! Free to walk abroad, with no secret in his heart; free to do as he pleased with his affections; free to woo Alice in honor; free to marry her !

He hurried along, and, ringing the bell of Mr. Dojere's house, called for Alice. Soon she came to him; and there, in the quiet of the old house, he told her of his past, of Cora, of her return to life, of his love for herself, of his unhappy parting with the wife who was a clog to his life, of her death—all (hold ! he did not tell her of Cora's mention of herself; perhaps he could not;

he attributed it to mere jealousy, at the most)—all—all but that; and Alice heard him. She said no word to interrupt the tale, but at its close she placed her hand in his, and raised her trusting face up to be kissed. No proposal of marriage had been made; but they knew, and were happy.

“Ah, race of mortal men,
How as a thing of naught
I count ye, though ye live;
For who is there of men
That more of blessing knows,
Than just a little while
To seem to prosper well,
And, having seemed, to fall?”

CHAPTER XI.

“Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin.”

IT was winter, and the Christmas season was not far off. The sorrows of the family had become as a wound which kindly time has scarred over, and quiet serenity reigned in Mr. Dojere's home.

To-night, however, the usual calm of the family is ruffled, for it is the night of a wedding, and Alice has but now become the wife of her foster-father's young partner. The wedding has been a quiet one, witnessed only by a few intimates, and the happy pair are soon to leave for a short tour, returning in time for the Christmas Eve reunion at the old home. Alice is very happy in this climax of her long, silent loving, and Albert is happier than he remembers ever to have been before, for this union is, he feels, in reality a joining of “two souls with but a single thought, two hearts that beat as one.”

Friendship may be the joining of "two souls with but a single thought," love the union of "two hearts that beat as one," but marriage, to be marriage in its highest sense, must be the union of soul with soul, and heart with heart, and few there are who find this boon. If such a union be possible on earth, surely that of two such beings as these just married gives promise of it.

The ceremony, and all that follows a wedding-day ceremony, being over, the time for the "good byes" had arrived, and Alice, in her traveling robes, having bid farewell to the good souls who had given her parents' care and love, went out into the cold, snowy night, leaning upon her husband's arm.

Albert placed her in the carriage, and was about to follow himself, when a person touched his arm, and, turning about, he beheld that, which seemed to freeze the blood in his heart,—the face of Cora Tate, pale, wan and passionless, but with a baleful glitter in its eyes. He tried to speak, but could not command his voice, and only stared. The time seemed to him long, but it was only a few seconds since she had touched him, when she spoke.

“Albert,” she said, “you were too willing to think me dead. You did not look well at that other’s face. You would not listen to me, when you thought me dying. You would not come near me, when you thought me dead. You have punished me more than was your right : you scorned me, when I gave you loving penitence : you spurned my dying counsel, and would not hear my warning voice. I hate you now ! I leave you to your fate. Go.”

Then the voice, which had been subdued and mellow, ceased ; and she was gone.

He never had any clear recollection of what followed, except that he found himself in the carriage, beside his wife, and that he was telling her some lie or other, about “an importunate beggar.” Alice, with woman’s quick perception, saw that he was troubled, but, with a wisdom not often possessed by woman, dropped the matter then and there, and never spoke of it again. She made up her mind that she would never look into the past again, but would devote herself to the happy “now.” There was wisdom in this, and many a married pair would be happier, were the wife to adopt this plan of living. Men are

not prone to inquiry into the past of their wives. They believe them pure, and, as a rule, battle against the very idea of thinking otherwise ; but women often allow themselves to pry back into the past of their husbands, and, in so doing, sometimes render a once assured happiness void, and make for themselves a future of senseless jealousies and miserable discomfitures. This was an error, into which Alice did not allow herself to drift.

So the wedding tour was, after all, a pleasant one, and unmarred by any disagreeable events. Albert, to be sure, was occasionally moody, and seemed absorbed in sombre thoughts, but he managed to keep them out of notice, most of the time, and Alice did not often allow him to brood alone.

As to Albert, his condition of mind was one, which he himself could not have described. He sometimes found himself almost believing that Cora was really dead, and that the face in the street was only a vision : yet he knew better. He knew that she was alive, and that he had made a hasty mistake, when in the morgue. " Albert, you were too willing to think me dead.

You did not look well at that other's face." The words came back to him, with terrible force. He had been too willing to believe her dead. It was true. Had the dead woman, in the morgue, been Alice, would he have given her but a passing glance? Ah, no. He knew it well, now. He had made a mistake, a terrible mistake, and one not to be remedied. The more he pondered on these things, the more he determined not to alter his course. He could not give up that which he had gained, and which he might still retain, if he could only find the means to silence this terrible witness. And he had money. With money he had saved Joe, and why not himself? Cora was alone, without friends, and an outcast, while he was powerful. She could be silenced, or, at any rate, if the worst came, suppressed beyond belief. He knew that he was becoming a villain at heart already, but the words of Cora had put him on his mettle, and now that the die was cast, he meant to fight for Alice, if need be. He never would have married her, knowing Cora to be alive, but he had married her honorably, and the fault was not his.

Thus he reasoned with himself and his warped

conscience. It was the best that he could do, he thought, and he mapped his course accordingly.

So they went away on their bridal tour, happy in each other, but with the little shadow of a cloud, no bigger than a hand, over them. Happy as they were, Alice felt the shadow of the cloud. Albert felt the shadow of the cloud, but, unlike Alice, knew that it was not the shadow of a cloud passing away, but of one rising and spreading over the horizon. How great or how little the storm behind it might be he knew not, but he felt its coming with ominous dread. Like the monarch of old, he saw the writing on the wall, and knew it was of evil portent, yet could not read its meaning. But it troubled him.

CHAPTER XII.

“ Could we but know the working of our deeds,
But tear the veil apart and see the end,
The horrid climax of some petted scheme
Might turn us from a foeman to a friend.”

“ Woe ! woe ! woe ! woe ! all cometh clear at last !
O light, may this my last glance be on thee,
Who now am seen, owing my birth to those
To whom I ought not, and with whom I ought not,
In wedlock living.”

CHRISTMAS eve. Albert and Alice had arrived home, the day before, and, to-night, were to be present at a social gathering in Mr. Dojere's house. It was early, as yet, and Albert had gone out, for an hour, to attend to some matters in which Santa Claus and the children are supposed to be jointly interested, leaving Alice in her pretty little room. Alice was very happy to-night, happy in her love, happy in the love of her husband and happy in her peace of mind and purity of soul. The little cloud, which had dimmed the glory of her sunshine, for a brief time, had vanished entirely during her wedding

tour, and Albert had been himself again. She sat in the pretty little easy-chair, which he had given her, and, glancing about the room, with its every color and fitting bespeaking, not only the good taste of its furnisher, but his love for her, was filled with this happiness unspeakable.

Here, in this *sanctum sanctorum* of their little home, would they pass the happiest hours of their lives. Here they would read together, here talk, in soft tones, of their mutual joys, and here, it might be, they would retire together in sorrow. Here she would be loved by the husband whom she worshipped, as the women of the mythologies worshipped their God-lovers, here her children would be born, here their proud father would first gaze upon them and upon her with that tenderness, which comes to manhood at the birth of its offspring and the safety of its best beloved. Here should be her home, her rest, her holy-of-holies.

Thus she sat dreaming, in the innocence and purity of her woman's soul.

Did you ever see a gentle dog, in company with its master, gazing at him with that trustful fondness, so common in the dog, when it has a

kind ruler? How happy the creature seems in this perfect faith. Some one unseen now discharges his murderous gun at the unsuspecting creature, and the death-dealing bullet pierces its side. Note the change from joy to misery, the sudden turning with rage at the person who has intended the wrong, as it thinks to its beloved master. Then let it slowly dawn upon the creature's mind, that it is the master himself, who has done this wrong, and it may flee from him in terror, but it loves him still. It is a theme worthy of a poet's pen. Such is the love of woman for the man, who, having won her affections, wrongs her.

As Alice sat, thus musing, in her room, a servant announced that a poor woman was without, who wished to speak to her.

"She said she must see you herself, m am," said the maid.

"Let her come into the reception room," said Alice. "I will see her there."

She went below in a minute, and, in the room, met a tall, finely built young woman, very shabbily dressed. Her face bore traces of beauty, but it also bore the marks of incurable disease.

What she might have been, it was difficult to imagine, but handsome she certainly had been. Alice motioned her to a seat, but she refused, with a nod, and remained standing.

"Are you the wife of Albert Thornbury," inquired the visitor.

"Yes."

"Do you love him very dearly?"

"What do you mean by such questions as these?" said Alice, calmly, but flushing at the manner of the stranger.

"No matter what I mean," replied the woman, "I have something to tell you."

"If there is anything I can do for you,—" said Alice.

"There is nothing you can do for me," said the woman. "I have a letter for your husband, that is all. I believe you are a woman who would not tell a lie. You look like one."

"I should hope so."

"Then, if I give this letter to you, you will deliver it to your husband."

"Certainly."

"Will you also read it first yourself?"

"I do not, generally, read my husband's letters."

"Then you cannot have this one."

"But why should I read it, pray?"

"Because it concerns you more than it does him."

"Very well ; I will read it then."

"And I wish you to read it now. It is not sealed, as you see. Read it now." And the woman handed her a stained, yellow piece of paper, in an equally much-stained envelope, and, stepping back a pace, waited for Alice to read.

As Alice read the blurred and faded writing, the woman watched, with evident, intense interest. The letter was dated Oct. —, 18—, over eighteen years before, and read as follows :

"DEAR ALBERT :

"The end is at hand. Deserted by you, and left to perish alone, I have borne all that I can bear. I do not ask you to think tenderly of me,—you have used me too cruelly for that ; but I want you to know what has become of our baby, for she is our baby, born in true wedlock, whether you own her or not. I have left her at the house of my father's old friend, in the hope that my sister will take her and be good to her. She will never know whose child she is caring

for, but I have placed my locket, the one which you gave me, when you loved me, upon her neck, with a note requesting that she be told, when she grows up, that she must always keep it, for her mother's sake. You will know the locket, and should you ever find her, be good to her, for she is your daughter,—and injure her not, for the sake of her mother, whom you destroyed. I shall never trouble you again. I go to meet my God, to-night. May He forgive you for the wrong you have done your wife.

“MARY MORTON THORNBURY.”

The letter was addressed, “Mr. Albert Thornbury, care Dojere & Co., London.”

Alice read the letter in a bewildered way, not half comprehending its import, but she knew that it was brought for the purpose of doing her husband harm, and it angered her.

“Have you read it?” said the woman.

“I have,” said Alice, “and I desire that you, villain, liar, forger as I am sure you are, leave my house at once.”

“You promised me—”

“And I will keep my promise,” cried Alice, flushing with anger. “My husband shall have

the letter, and will, probably, know how to deal with the blackmailer who originated it. Leave me at once!"

"Certainly, madam, with pleasure. If you should want any witnesses as to the genuineness of the letter, there is an address," throwing a card upon the table. "Good evening," and the woman went quietly from the room.

Somehow the sight of that pure, girlish face unnerved her, and deprived her of all desire to see her suffering. "It will be enough to know that he is punished," she said to herself, as she went forth into the snowy night. "She loves him, she loves him," she muttered, "and, my God, so do I!" and she hurried away.

Alice, now that the woman had departed, began to think. She read the letter carefully, to the end. It did not, as yet, enter her mind that this could be anything more than a scheme to levy blackmail upon her husband, but, nevertheless, there was one passage in the letter which puzzled her. Perhaps it was only a coincidence, but it was strange. Of her own birth and parentage she knew nothing, excepting that she was an adopted daughter, and more than that

she never had asked to know. The impression on her mind was, that her parents were both dead long ago. Mr. and Mrs. Dojere had been father and mother to her, and it had never occurred to her to think of any others as being such. But one thing in that letter troubled her; not that it occurred to her to connect her husband with it, in any way, but because it was a queer coincidence. She did have a locket, which had come into her possession, in a manner similar to that described in the letter. Mrs. Dojere had given it her, on her tenth birthday, and told her that it had been left for her, by her mother, with a request that she would always keep it, for her mother's sake. More than this Mrs. Dojere had never told her, and Alice had supposed that this was all that she knew. The locket was a peculiar trinket, quite large, heart-shaped, curiously engraved and studded with a row of small diamonds, and bearing the inscription, "*'Till death does us part,*" in French. How could the writer of this vile letter have hit upon such an odd coincidence?

She went to her jewel-case and got the locket, and, almost for the first time in her life, began

to wonder who her mother was, and to speculate upon the mystery of her parentage, and had almost forgotten the disagreeable letter, in her meditation upon the other topic, when Albert entered.

How handsome he was, fresh from the winter air, with a bright sparkle in his eyes, as he laid the mysterious Christmas bundles upon the table, slyly hiding one in his pocket, and came to her. He leaned over her and gently kissed her beautiful hair. He did not see the letter or the locket, for they lay in the shadow, and he was too intent in gazing upon the dear face that he loved, to notice surroundings.

“Why this look of worriment on my pretty face?” said he, noticing the expression of her countenance.

“Oh, Albert, such a visit as I have had since you went out. A strange woman came to me, and brought a letter which, she said, was for me to read and give to you,—a horrible, blackmailing letter! And I have been so angry over it, to think that any one could expect to make me think ill of you, darling. Here; you can read it, and then throw it into the fire, or keep it as

evidence to catch the villains, if they ever come again." And, with love, trust, faith and confidence depicted in her bright eyes, she handed him the letter.

He took it, with an expression of curiosity, and began to read it, carelessly at first, then slowly and attentively. An expression of pain and regret came over his face, so that Alice said :

"Oh, don't let that thing worry you. Nobody is going to turn me against you, dear."

"True, darling," he replied, "it is foolish to mind such sneaking things as this."

He had composed himself by this time, remembering the presence of his wife,—but he was thinking with painful intensity. For him there was no doubting the genuineness of the letter. The handwriting of Mary Morton he knew at once, and this, this letter, brought on a Christmas eve, in the honeymoon of his only happy marriage, was like a visitor from the grave. It explained nothing clearly, but it told him that Mary was, without doubt, dead, and it told him also that there was, somewhere in the world, either a living child of his own, or a grave containing her remains. Which?—Were this child alive, how

much might she know or not know? Mary's letter told him that the child, his babe, had been left at the house of Mr. Dojere. Neither Dojere nor his wife had ever mentioned the fact. It would not be like Dojere, if he knew that such was the case, to hesitate to tell him, Albert, about it, and to censure him soundly for the whole affair. Probably it was Mary's intention to leave her babe there, but something had prevented. And, again, how came it to happen that the letter should be so long delayed, and then delivered in such a manner. That, certainly, did look like blackmail; but the writing—it was surely that of his first girl-love. Could Mary have known Cora? No, that was impossible; yet, somehow, he began to think that Cora might have been the bearer of the letter, and he was pondering over this when Alice, speaking, aroused him from his thoughts. "Anyhow," he thought, "she shall never know that it is anything but a spurious document."

"Never mind the letter, dear," said she, "but let me tell you something singular. You see the letter mentions a locket left by a mother for her babe. You know I am only an adopted child

of Mr. Dojere; and is it not strange that, as a coincidence I should have a locket, which my mother left for me, with an injunction, similar to that described in this foolish letter? See, here it is, dear. You have probably never noticed it, as I seldom wear it, fearing that it might be lost." And she placed the locket in his hand.

Albert took it mechanically, (his thoughts had begun to become strangely confused, while his wife was speaking) and looked at it, at first quickly, then with a steady gaze, full of amazement, terror and conflicting emotions. Alice was frightened at his appearance. She started to speak, but he moved his hand in a manner which stilled her at once, and filled her with a nameless fear.

For a long time, Albert gazed upon that locket. He knew it well. It was one made to his own order, for Mary Morton, nearly twenty years before, and he knew it. His gift to Mary; Mary's gift to her child; to his child; and a gift to his wife from her mother. There could be no doubt. The beautiful woman before him was his daughter! He looked at her, a searching, piercing look, that chilled her heart,—and,

as he looked, he began to see a resemblance, faint but true, to the sweet girl, whom he had basely ruined and deserted. Thought after thought came pouring over his mind, and as the truth, the terrible truth of bald facts, became clear, a sound of anguish, such as few ever utter, burst from his lips,—and with a cry, like that of the fate-stricken Œdipus, a cry of horror and anguish, he rushed from the room,—and Alice heard him hurrying through the halls and into his library, closing the door behind him. Then all was still.

How long she remained there in terror, she never knew, but she was aroused by the entrance of a servant, who said that Mr. Dojere was below, and had come to ask, what delayed her and Mr. Thornbury so long. Alice had always loved this strangely bluff old gentleman, as a daughter should, and she went to him at once.

“We had begun to think that you were sick, daughter,” he said, as he kissed her. “Why have you not been at the house; and where is Albert?”

Filled with a nameless terror, she handed him the letter and the locket; and, fleeing from his

presence, before he could restrain her, she hurried along the hallway to the library. She opened the door gently, and entered the room. He was not there. On a table was a note, which she knew at once to be for her from her husband. It merely told her to read some letters, which were laid on the table, and she would know all. There were two of them, and they were in the same handwriting as the first received that evening, and bore the signature, "Your loving wife, Mary M. Thornbury."

Slowly and surely the light began to dawn upon her clouded thoughts. Mary Morton; her baby, his baby; left with Mrs. Dojere; the locket; herself; herself and the locket; the locket and Mary Morton; Mary Morton and Albert Thornbury; her husband!—

As, to a man, walking in the dark, along a road, the flash of the lightning reveals the sudden presence of a deadly serpent in the act of springing at him, so, at the silent mention of her husband, the whole truth flashed upon Alice. It was all true, the letter was genuine,—and he knew it. Her husband was her father! She was his daughter, basely deserted, in her

infancy, to be more basely debased in her womanhood! A sickening horror filled her high-bred soul, her head was all afire within, her brain seemed filled with horrid fumes, a sense of loathing for herself came over her, and, with a moan of woeful *timbre*, she staggered across the room, and parting the drapery between the library and reception room, stopped on the threshold, transfixed by a sight which met her gaze, "a sight to touch e'en hatred's self with pity."

Albert Thornbury lay upon the floor, dead. With a cry of love, for love will live when other senses are dead, she fell upon the corpse and covered it with kisses. Surely she might love him, now that he was dead ; but a second thought came ; Mary Morton was dead, and Mary Morton was his wife ; while she, what was she ! Worse than anything of which society can conceive, worse than the commonest of the common, lower than the lowest. Hastily rising, she hurried to her room, just as Mr. Dojere, who had been trying to make something out of the letter which she had given him to read, entered the parlor, and found the dead body of his partner lying upon the floor.

With the help of a man servant, whom he summoned quickly, he carried Albert to his room, summoned a doctor, and took possession of the house. He sent for his wife, and, then, telling her briefly what had happened, sent her in search of Alice. Then he read the letter again, and also those found in the library, thought a while,—and perceived the truth. As he arose from a chair, with a heart heavier than he had ever known before, his wife met him at the door, her face full of terror, and her eyes running with tears. Alice was nowhere to be found. She had fled.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Be sure your sin will find you out."

"To eyes which spoke and said: Sleep, Dreams and Death—we are the only gods that answer prayer; with the faint gleam of the tender evening light, there came a human form, barefooted, bareheaded, with broken links of golden chains gleaming here and there upon her limbs, with white robes hanging heavily, soaked with dews and rains, * * * and fell at the feet of Thanatos."

She had fled. Even as her mother, nearly twenty years before, had fled from her home, with her burden of shame and her breaking heart, to bury her crushed soul and outraged womanhood in oblivion, so Alice now fled, from all that was dear to her. In the short hour, which had turned her happiness to agony, she had lost all care for life, all yearning for friendships, all desire for love. One idea alone now filled her mind, an idea which had never before come to her. She now cared not to see ever again the faces of those to whom she had been so dear. The kind friends, the tender foster-parents, the once beloved husband, were all alike to her objects of terror.

But one idea filled her soul, and one creature alone, of all the universe, had a place in her heart. She yearned for her mother. To this one person of all the universe she yearned to go ; and she was dead. With a sense that God had entirely deserted her, she felt that Mother, and Mother alone, would have taken her in, loathsome as she had become in her own sight, and given her comfort. She had now, out of all the mass of confused thoughts which filled her brain, but one idea.

Hurrying along, in the chilly winter night, she bore, in her hand, the card, which the horror-bringing messenger had left. As she hurried along the streets, she was conscious that it was a gala night ; that the store-windows were ablaze with lights, that happy people were jostling past her, as they bore their Christmas burdens to happy homes, and that the world was gay. The world was happy, but it was no longer her world. For her there was now no world, past, present, or future. She was the one, of all the world, who was unlike all the rest, and a terrible sense of loneliness came upon her. She met a party of bad women in company with worse men.

She was lower than they. How they would laugh in scorn, could they know her story. As she passed them, one of the men spoke to her, but she was not offended. Why should she be? She had fallen lower than he, or his companions. You smile at her illogical ideas; but would the world, to-morrow, be more just to her than she was to herself? On she goes through the streets, turning here and there, as she notes, by the lettering on the lamp-posts, the course she wishes to take.

At last she has reached her destination. She enters the wretched den of Isaac, and inquires for Cora. The old man informs her that he does not know who she is. He is frightened, for he is not certain that this visit may not forebode some trouble for himself; and when she abruptly tells him her name, and her errand, he is only too glad to do that which she asks, and which he alone can do. Donning his old hat and coat, the aged man goes forth with her into the night, and something of pity, if not regret, touches him, as he looks at the woe-begone face of the girl, whom he has helped to ruin. Through the streets together go the once proud and happy

lady of refinement and culture and the sordid Jew. On they go, Alice walking in silence, while Isaac leads the way. He does not understand what this journey means, but he is afraid not to obey, so on they go, until, at last, they come to a grave-yard. Tracing the way carefully among the stones and mounds, old Isaac leads her to a remote corner of the plat, and, by a sign, indicates a certain grave.

“Are you sure?” she asks.

“I am, my lady, for I followed her here, myself, nigh twenty years ago, and marked the spot,” he replies.

“Very well, you may go,” she says, and hands him her purse.

Mechanically his sordid hands grasp his god, and he moves away, wondering whether he has done a wise thing or not.

He is gone, and she is alone at last, with the only thing in the universe for which she cares—her mother’s ashes. She feels a sense of peace stealing over her shocked and anguished soul, and fancies she feels a presence near her. She knows it is her mother, for it allays the terrible yearning which has been her agony this dread-

ful night. She is not certain just how long it may have been since she fled from that horror, but it has been a long time, anyhow. This is her mother's grave. "Mother," "Mother;" she keeps repeating the soft word over to herself, and it seems to do her good. And she never knew her; never knew this sweet woman who loved her, this long-suffering woman, who died for her, in the hope that she might be saved to an honorable life. Perhaps, after all, it is better as it is. Had she learned her mother's story in a different way, she might have wronged her in her heart. Now she adores her as a saint. It is not so dark as it was. Morning must be near. The thought of daylight brings a dread to her heart; she must not wait so long. Her mother *must* come soon and take her. She feels that this will be so, and that all she has to do is to wait. It is chilly, but she hardly notes it, and a drowsy feeling is stealing over her. She seems to be half alive and half in a trance-like state, and again she feels that gentle presence. How soothing it is, how full of restfulness! She must have had some such feeling as this, when, a little babe, she fell asleep in her moth-

er's arms. She *is* asleep and dreaming—but no: that vision was too vivid for a dream. Fair, sweet face, tender eyes: this is no dream; it is Mother! A soft sigh, and Alice is asleep—peaceful, quiet sleep, such as comes only to the innocent of heart and pure of soul.

They found her next morning, dead, in the neglected corner of the burial ground, upon one of the pauper graves. Neither Mr. Dojere nor his wife ever knew why she had gone there to die. Only God and her mother held that secret. They buried her beside her false husband, for it was best that it should so be done, and the horrid secret of their lives was buried with them. The grave keeps its own counsel, so long as men disturb it not, and there were none who cared to invoke secrets from these graves.

So let them rest: she the fair, unsullied soul, so fit to live, so fit to die, prepared for either state; he the noble and the ignoble, who thought that repentance alone without reparation could atone for wilful sin, and of whom it is best to say:

“ No further seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode
(There they alike in trembling hope repose),
The bosom of his Father and his God,”

The tale is told. In the quiet of the grave, among the silent multitudes of bygone years, crumble the remains of Albert Thornbury. In the narrow bed next him lies the woman whom he loved with the tenderness of manhood's strong passion, and whom he knew, too late, could never be his wife; whom he blasted in her womanhood, and against whom he sinned, unconsciously but beyond redress. She lies in the wife's place, but she is not his wife. In the far corner of the same plat, unknown, unmourned, forgotten, is another grave, and in it lies the woman who is his wife, and against whom he sinned guiltily. Three graves, containing the wrecks of three lives, destroyed by a boy's sinful mistake.

"Be sure your sin will find you out." Men repeat the words often, but they do not believe them to be true. Could we raise the impenetrable curtain of time, and see the scene behind, could we foresee the end of our bad beginnings, this might become an almost sinless world. Could the thoughtless girl, coquetting in her innocent sense of safety, toying with the double-edged tools, which, sooner or later, cut back and

rend the heart with merciless stabs, blighting the life and making a double terror of death, foresee the end, she would be more careful of herself, and value less, than she does, the empty gratifications of vanity. Could the venerated pastor, seeking the companionship of the women of his congregation, ever too ready to fall in love with their father-confessor, meaning perhaps no harm, foresee the intricate meshes of the toils into which he is weaving himself, he would be more circumspect in his conduct. Could the young man, lightly trifling with the loves of women, knowing little of the power of that delicious poison, which destroys body, soul and mind, know the danger which lurks behind the golden glories of such delights, and see the work which time will develop, he would seek his mother oftener and the soft-skinned beauties of his choice would lose, for him, many of their charms. Could the man of business, misapplying the trusts in his charge, a little here a little there, falsifying his accounts, robbing this one to deceive that one, covering his tracks skillfully, and, as he thinks, forever, foresee the end, the disgrace, the ruin, the never to be rectified wrong which he is

doing himself, his dealings would be honest, and his conduct above reproach and honorable. We see it not ; we have no faith in the words. They apply to others, but not to ourselves. *Our* sin will not find us out. Albert Thornbury little thought that the sin of twenty years oblivion would ever come back to him. Little did he suspect that, in the very moment of his greatest happiness, when all the troubles of his life were at rest, when he had at last found the one thing needful to fill the vacant place in his man's heart,—little did he think, that, at this moment of self-satisfaction, the horrible truth would be forced upon him that his sin had found him out.

And, more terrible even than this, comes the dreadful truth of that other awful warning, the truth of which is proven, in moral and physical life, at all times, that the sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children, innocent and guilty alike to bear the yoke of sorrow and to feel the stern grip of the hand of punishment : cruel, unjust, diabolical, no doubt,—but a fact. We see it in the everyday meeting with our fellows ; the morally warped, the socially degraded, the sinfully diseased, the hopelessly insane, all bear wit-

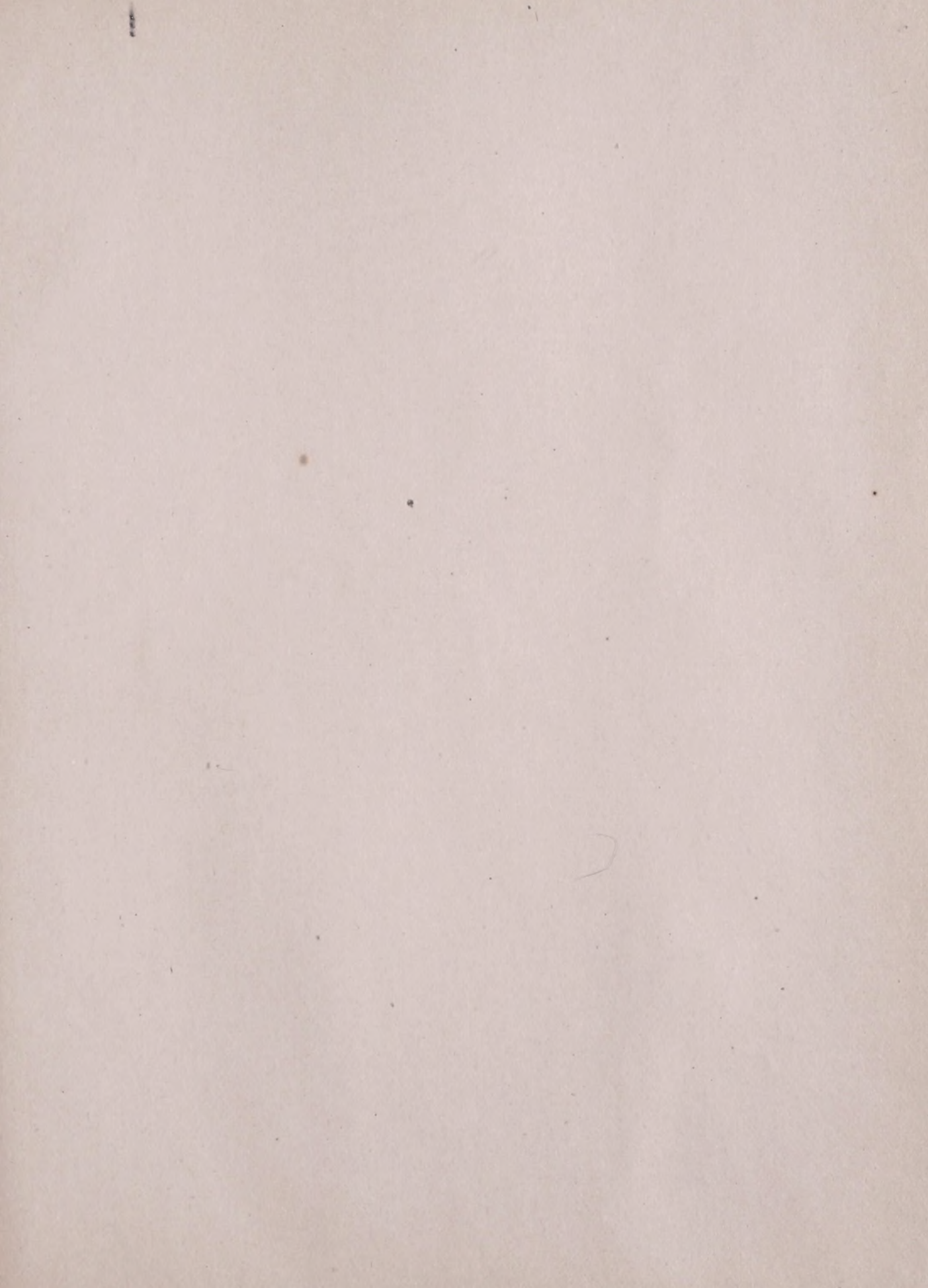
ness of this dreadful truth. Whether there is justice or sense in such a law, whether it be divine or devil-bred, we cannot say, but it is a law, an inexorable, terrible, awful fact. "Be sure your sin will find you out:" if not during your life, perhaps, in the lives of those, whom you leave behind you, to struggle through their lives, handicapped by your folly, cursed by your sins. Could the millions, to-day laboring under the blight placed upon them by their fathers, behold, as in a panorama, the deeds for which they now are doing penance, being innocent themselves, there might be an uprising of indignation, a pouring out of the phials of wrath, a panic of cursings and reproach, such as the God of the Jews himself could scarcely hope to hurl from his high throne above.

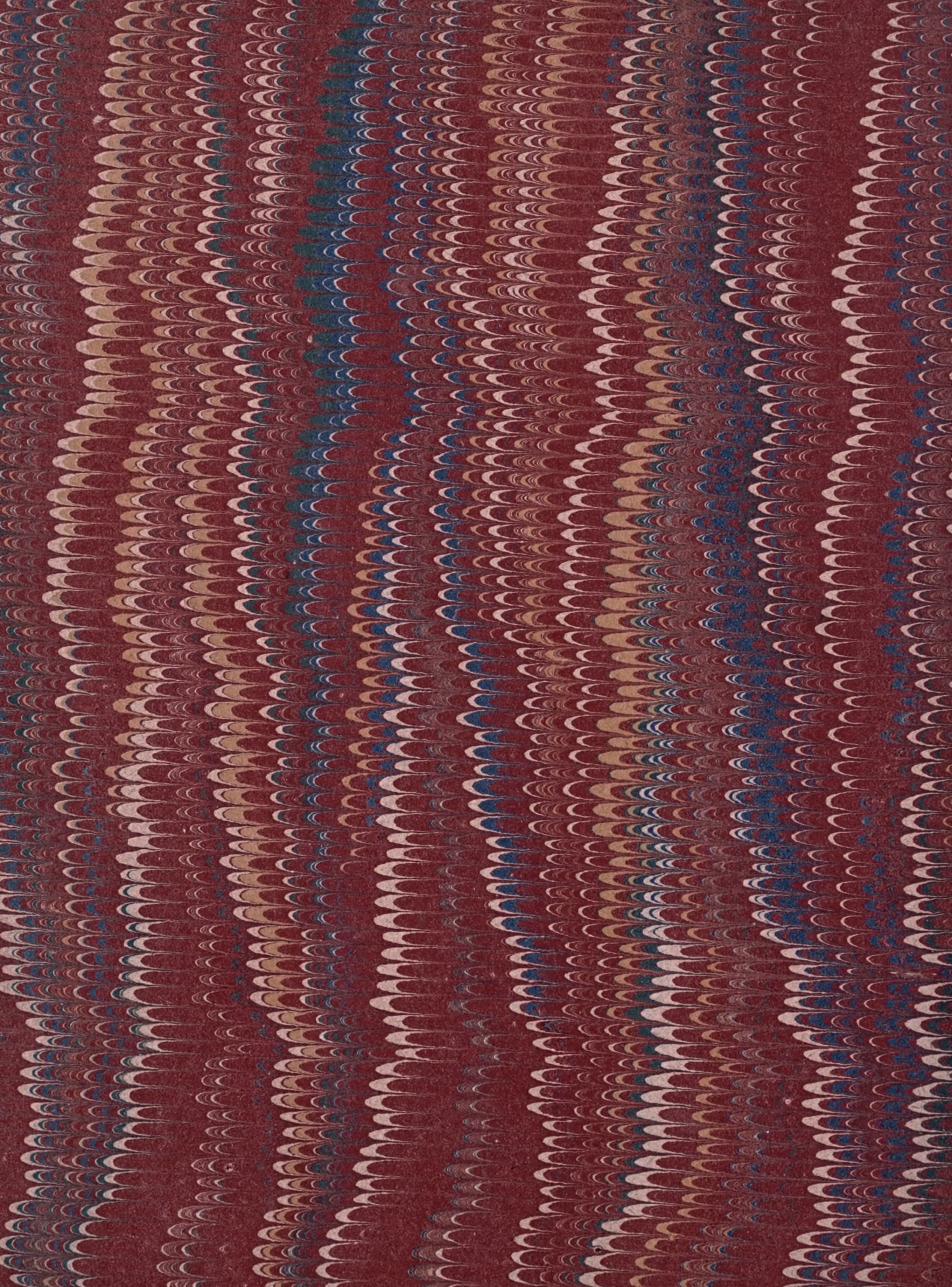
"Be sure your sin will find you out;" this has a significance more than personal, wider in its application than the laws of nations, or the religions of the world. The man who loves his honor, the man who loves his posterity, the man who loves mankind (and, if one be not such a man as this, he is but little higher than the breeding-bull or the protozoon, which parts from its

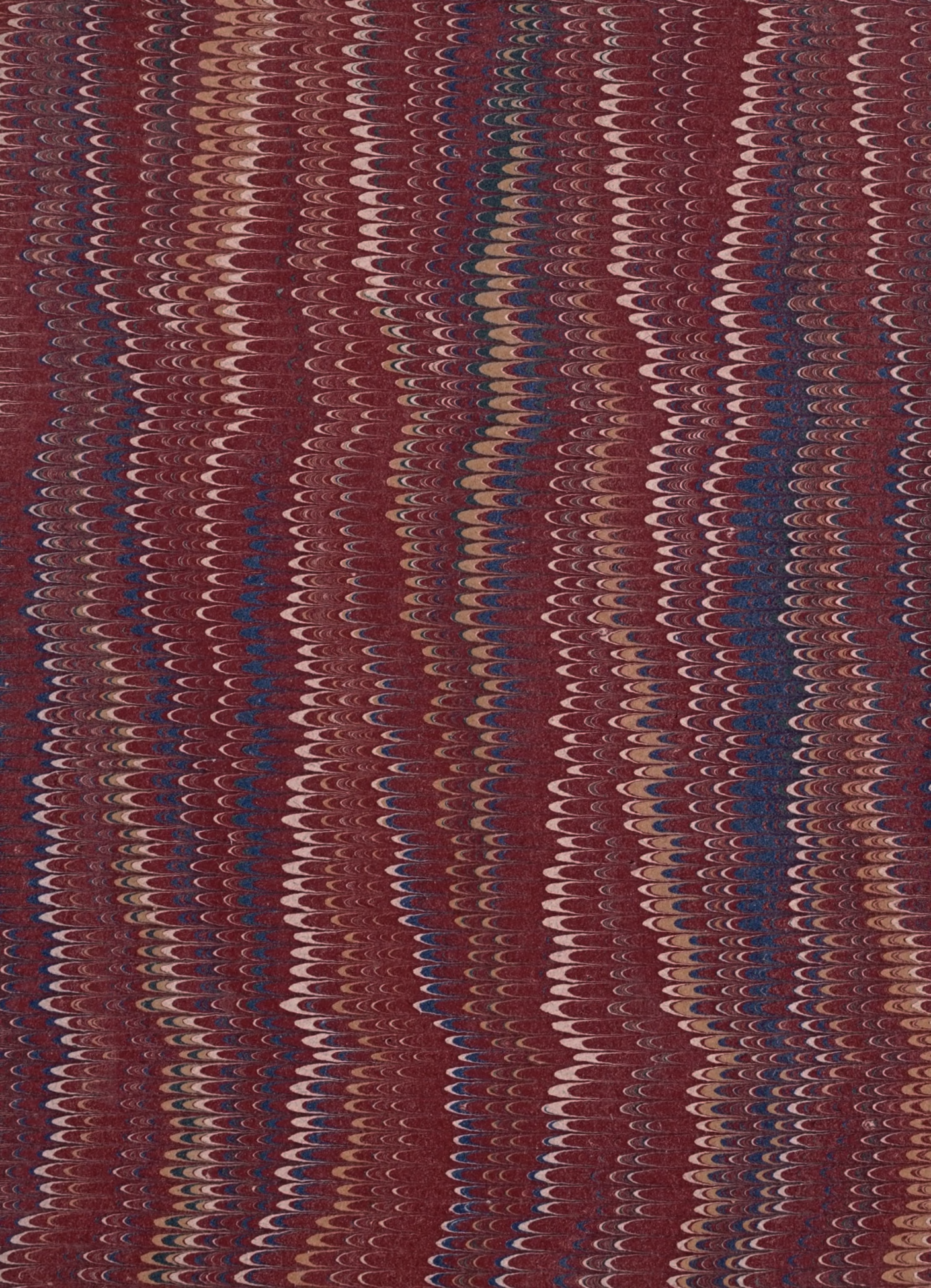
budded offspring never to meet it again) must ever bear this truth in mind. If he is sure that his sin will find him out, reading the injunction in its broadest meaning, he will be careful lest he sin. These words carry with them no promise of pardon, no hint of forgiveness, no hope of absolution. They are plain, terse, and not to be misunderstood. They are the embodiment of all warnings against wrong-doing, and the succinct codification of unalterable, inexorable, passionless law.

“Be sure your sin will find you out.”

THE END.







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